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Central Mailer: Jerry G. Bails, 22529 Karam Ct., Warren, Michigan

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SHMOZ 5

...being more of the same old stuff from that Never-Well-Hardly-Ever Land which is the mind of Phil Castora (that's me), who resides at 3177 W 5th St, Los Angeles 90005, California.

I have just had a remarkable experience. Well, it's not really all that remarkable lately, since I've been doing a lot of that lately, but not about comics. And I have been almost literally forced to change my mind this time. The cause is, as you might have guessed, the reappearance of the one and only

SPECTRE!

There have, of course, been no less than three versions of the Spectre. The first was the best, written by Jerry Siegel and drawn by Bernard Baily (not "Bailey", as the text page in Showcase #60 has it), and the object of all the fulsome and richly deserved praise heaped upon it by us rabid fans. As a matter of fact, it started rather poorly, but with great promise which was soon realized.

Siegel was a fan of the old pulp magazines, and more than anything else he ever did the Spectre shows it. The prose is somewhat stilted, and full of nouns and adjectives rarely found outside of Roget's Thesaurus and nineteenth century Gothic horror stories. It was extremely effective, though it would have palled quite rapidly had it not been kept to an absolute minimum. Siegel and Baily must have worked very closely, as the story would be carried mostly by means of the drawing, with an absolute minimum of captions and dialog — though this is also true of his Superman stories.

The art was kind of strange. Although loaded with talent, Baily was still learning how to draw. Nevertheless, he was already experimenting with various dramatic techniques, while other artists were content to copy from the big names, mainly Alex Raymond of Flash Gordon fame. It wasn't till 1942 that all of his faces were recognizably human. Nevertheless, he evinced a powerful dramatic talent. Sometimes, it verged on the humorous, but still maintaining the power -- as, for instance, in All-Star #7, where the Grim Ghost, lost in thought, absent-mindedly leans over a ringed planet. Baily, no less than Siegel, thought BIG.

And the Spectre was BIG -- not just when he would swell to gigantic stature to better deal with the villainous machinations of the heavy — his mission was not personal vengeance nor being a sort of super Boy Scout going around do-gooding all over the place; he was, purely and simply, an instrument of justice. As Fox so eloquently (and purply) puts it, "...a powerful phantom against whom the forces of evil could not survive! His was a mission of morals, to balance the scales against the criminals who preyed upon the weak and helpless..." Other heroes might be confused (temporarily, of course) by a complex situation, or even misled for a short time by an innocent-looking con man -- or woman -- but not the Grim Ghost. He was Justice personified. At the end of the story, everyone got exactly what he deserved. Racketeers were placed in the hands of the law they mocked; gangsters and extortionists were repaid the terror they spread to the last jot; killers were spared no mercy. In one story (More Fun #56 [?]), a gang of killers attempt to escape by car. The Spectre grows to tremendous proportions, picks up the vehicle in a gigantic hand -- and crushes it to a pulp!

Meanwhile, of course, innocent victims were restored their money and property

and set free from the toils of the evil mastermind who had attempted to subjugate them. Good versus evil, and good won out 100% in the end. With, perhaps, the exception of Gardner Fox, no one was better than Siegel at dishing out pure, triple-distilled quintessence of the pulp leitmotif.

In the first few stories, the writing was rather awkward; a number of panels seemed to serve no other purpose than to keep up the countto eight panels to the page. But it smoothed out rapidly, and in addition Siegel managed to get a number of cliff-hanger type situations going on the bottoms of right hand pages. A simple trick, but, oddly enough, subtly effective. And, as I mentioned before, the style was quite good, not to mention eminently suited to the character of the hero. All in all, the Spectre may not have been perfect, but it was certainly head and shoulders above anything else around -- as long as you overlooked a minor plot inconsistency now and again, and they were, as a metter of fact, rather easy to overlook.

With the December 1941 issue of More Fun, #74, Baily took over the writing. This would have been fine, as he had been doing an excellent job on the Spectre episodes in All-Star; however, the then newly-formed Editorial Advisory Board seems to have taken a din view of the Man of Darkness, who rapidly sank to the role of guardian angel to an idiot named Percival Popp, the Super-Cop, who was almost stupid enough to be one of the Three Dimwits in the Flash stories. Thankfully, Popp was omitted entirely from the All-Star version of the Spectre; however, it was in All-Star that the Dark Knight suffered his worst literary and artistic tragedy -- at least in More Fun, Baily wrote and drew well enough, though he was doing little more than hacking; Joe Gallagher did the last couple of episodes in All-Star (as well as several more which were replaced by Flash episodes when the company split in 1945). I'm sure there must have been some saving grace about Gallagher's work, but in my opinion it was abysmal.

And now we come to the present -- Showcase #60. Well, let's get the faults out of the way first, and see if there's anything left. The writing is, once more, rather ("rather"??) melodramatic. It's smoother than Siegel's. There's just one thing wrong -- there's at least six times as much as necessary. Instead of telling a story with pictures, bridging with words, one is confronted with huge masses of prose, interspersed with an appalling superfluity of sobriquets. (Great Ghu -- it's contagious!)

Next is the story itself. What there is of it is good. There is a quite justifiable flashback, well handled -- these should be used sparingly, you know; in the second of the Green Lantern-in-the-future series (what ever happened to that, by the way?), John Broome had three flashbacks nested in one another like those sets of measuring sppons you get for for the kitchen. Elegant display of something or other, but it does make following the plot more work than I care for. Anyway, fox tells a nice, neat, straightforward story in twenty-four pages -- Siegel would have done it in twelve. But then Siegel wrote for eight panels per page, not four and five. (Average: 4.85) I don't like to use a magnifying glass to see what's going on, but neither do I like to feel cheated. Come on, fellas -- you can do better than that!

And finally, the six-page battle at the end was bit too much of a sameness. There is such a thing as monotony.

Now, what about the art. Ah, the art. Yes. Well, Murphy Anderson is certainly the best inker in the bhsiness. His drawing -- well, his drawing used to be a bit on the unimaginative side, and somewhat lifeless. Then he began drawing Hawkman, and one day I noticed subtle hints of Joe Kubert and early, how-would-Alex Raymond-draw-it Shelly Moldoff. Then he began doing the JSA revivals, and all sorts of new ideas suggested themselves to him. But this time, he's outdone

himself. Though he's used a couple of tricks such as the hair standing on end to indicate terror and the dust/exhaust cloud trailing behind automobiles, he hasn't so much copied Baily as used him for ideas. Anderson's style may be derivative, but he knows whom to derive what from, and the result is very satisfying, even if it isn't exactly like Baily (or Kubert or Moldoff or Burnley) of the forties. (Oddly enough, there's even a touch of Howard Sherman at the end -- apparently when Anderson was reading those old More Fun issues, he went on to the Doctor Fate stories as well.) I have two minor complaints, and they may be (or maybe not) the fault of Schwartz: first the Spectre should have been drawn differently in places to show that he was supposed to be invisible -- Baily occasionally showed this by parallel lines in white all through the figure; and second the Man of Darkness shouldn't appear in a blaze of light; even Gallagher knew this. In All-Star #22, when the other members of the Justice Society appeared in the past in a golden glow, the Spectre stepped out of "Stygian darkness". But these are relatively minor points.

Altogether, the story is a success, if appreciably less than perfect. The Spectre is still the old Spectre; long may he terrorize villainy, and thank you Messrs Schwartz, Fox, and Anderson. This makes up for an awful lot -- maybe even (shudder!) "The Strange Death of Batman!"

* * *

I mentioned Bernard Baily above; he's working for National again, you know. He did the Flash-Martian Manhunter issue of Brave & Bold some time ago, then did some short stories for Jack Schiff in Strange Adventures, and is now doing Prince Ra-Man in House of Secrets. If you still don't believe he can draw well, look at the public service page "The Magic Card" in recent issues. He can do beautiful work when he bothers.

Murphy Anderson used to work for Fiction House, back in the forties and early in the fifties. He did a series of stories in Planet Comics, and did nearly all the covers for the pulp magazine Planet Stories, which means he probably illustrated a story or two by Gardner Fox. But you'd have trouble recognizing his work if you're only familiar with his recent art.

Have any of you seen Charlton's latest effort, Thunderbolt? It's the first effort of that company that I approve of, despite the dinosaur. It's credited to P.A.M., who I suspect is editor Pat Masulli. In any case, the story and writing are passable if not by any means first rate, and the art isn't all that bad -- at least the artist knows a few things about anatomy and faces -- not very much, perhaps, but at last he does know something. Now you take someone like Mike Sekowsky who does beautiful work as long as he doesn't have to show someone in any sort of action. A person would have to be more than double-jointed to get into the incredibly awkward positions Sekowsky draws heroes in.

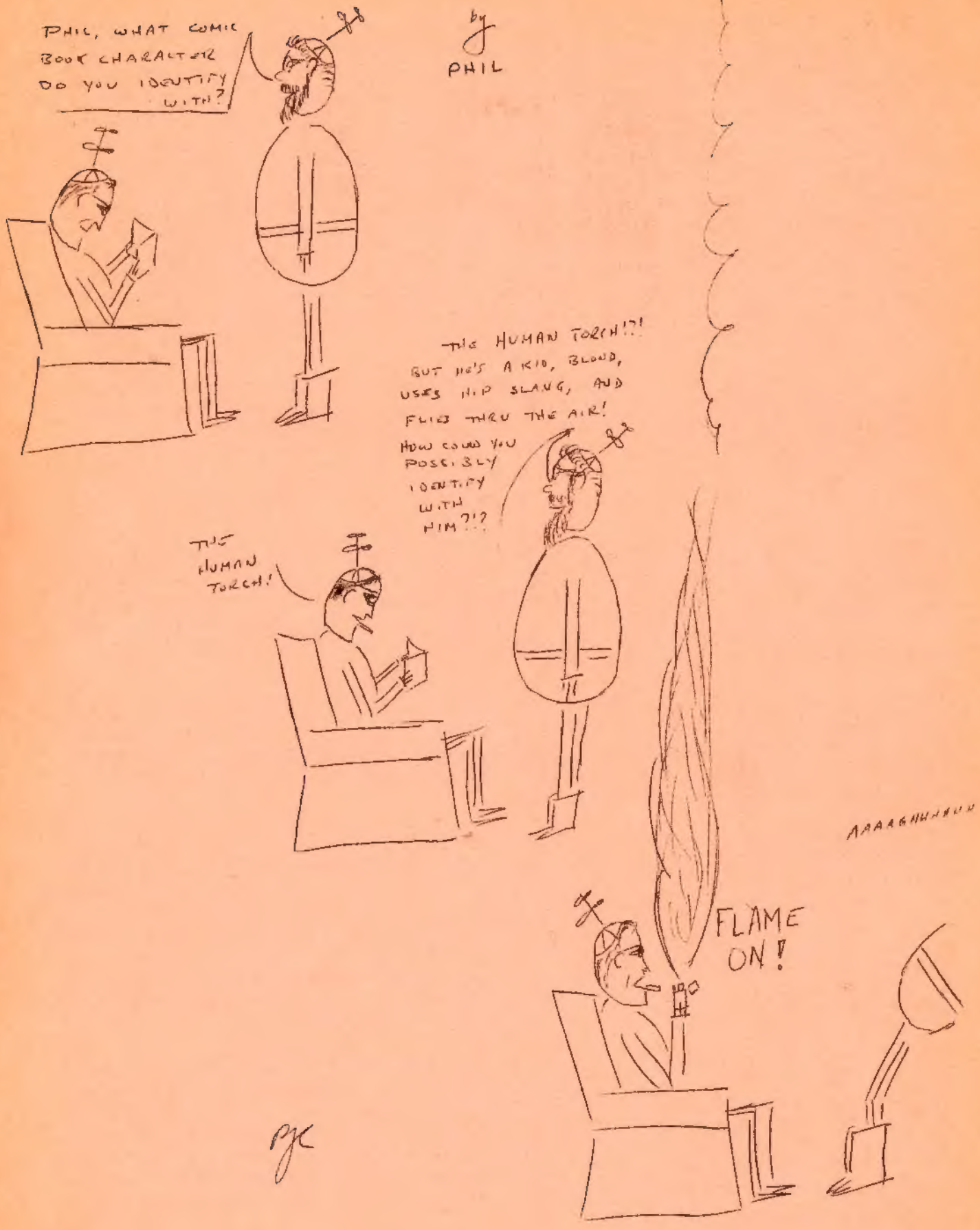
In case you haven't guessed, I'm trying to fill up space. I'll do a cartoon on the next page -- sorry I haven't time to get Bjo to do anything. I wish I could get her to do a comic strip for me like she did for Apa-L some time ago. But she'd have to get to know the members better -- her Apa-L strip was full of all manner of references to personal idiosyncrasies, artistically exaggerated, which made it quite hilarious to everyone who knew what she was talking about. Maybe I can get her to do something for me next time, or perhaps Fred Patten will, as he sees her more often than I do.

°°°

me

by

PHIL


PHIL, WHAT COMIC BOOK CHARACTER DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH?
THE HUMAN TORCH!?! BUT HE'S A KID, BLOND, USES HIP SLANG, AND FLIES THRU THE AIR! HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY IDENTIFY WITH HIM?!?
THE HUMAN TORCH!
AAAAGHHHHH
FLAME ON!

pjc

SARABAND

emergency
This is an ~~xxxxx~~ issue of Saraband since Jerry notified me with K-a # 14 that my latest contribution hadn't arrived as of mailing time. Something apparently happened to it between the time I mailed the stencils off and the time the finished products should have arrived in Michigan. I can't use the contribution I had originally planned for this issue since part of it has allready been put on stencil and mailed off to the same address the missing stencils were sent to. Which leaves me with nothing to do but write up an entirely new issue, in the short time I have left. As my records are where I can't get to them at the moment and since time is in very short supply I believe I'll start with mailing comments first.

Fred Patten: Is it definite that "The Great Comic Book Heroes" will cost $9.95? Reason I ask is that for the past few months a dealer has been placing ads claiming that it will cost $12.50 when published and that they were offering it for sale at a special low price of $8.95. Which is correct? It isn't on sale here yet so I can't find out by checking the price in the book itself.

Jerry Bails: Has the Man in Black really been revived by Harvey? A second issue of his comic is long overdue. According to the legend on the first page of issue #1 it is supposedly published bi-monthly. A second issue of Man in Black is so long overdue that I can see that it isn't even being published quarterly. Perhaps Harvey intends to make it an annual or a semi-annual publication. That is, if they intend to publish any more issues of it.

Maggie Thompson: I suppose I should have been more clearer about what I meant when I said that Classics Illustrated adapted "only one bad book." I suspect that my trouble arises from the fact that I don't normally type up a first draft, correct it, and then place it on stencil. Instead I just go ahead and put my thoughts directly on stencil and hope for the best. What I was speaking of was not the Classics Illustrated adaptations but, the books that were adapted. I had a similar problem with Pudd'nhead Wilson, only my problem arose from the fact that my copy was the second half of a Royal Giant paperback. For some unknown reason the publishers had changed the name to The Unnatural Son. The title alone was what stopped me. I just couldn't see such a book written by Mark Twain and didn't think that it would be any good.

If Unknown/Unknown Worlds was the only exception you could find to my statement about the pulps it still stands. Have you noticed how Popular Library seem to be trying to revive the pulps with its recent pulp size anthologies. I wonder why they didn't bring back ThenPhantom Detective in such a book instead of letting Regency publish the stories in a regular paperback edition. For that matter, how come they didn't do it themselves as one of their own paperbacks?

John Ryan: Just how do you get K-a? You managed to get #13 before I did, and write a contribution for #14 on the basis of that issue. This wouldn't be so unusual if you lived anywhere in North America but, you live in Australia thousands of miles away. So I repeat, just how do you do it?

Don Thompson: You're right about Standard Publications use of House Names. I'd completely forgotten about Captain Future. They also seem to have done the same thing with their two Texas Rangers, Jim Hatfield and Walt Slade. Or are they just using house names only on the paperbacks with their stories? Maggie again: ~~xxxxxxxx~~ consider me a cynic. If Unknown was so good why wasn't it revived after the war? I once had a copy of From Unknown Worlds and didn't notice anything out of the ordinary about the stories in it. The mailman has just arrived with a package of pulps among which were seven issues of Texas Rangers, all with Jim Hatfield stories by Jackson Cole, so evidently the use of a house name on this series isn't confined to the paperbacks. Does anyone out there have any copies of Thrilling Western that he can check to see if all the Walt Slade stories are signed by Brad Scott, same as with the paperbacks?

Roy Thomas: My copy of Alter-Ego #9 arrived with the pulps and I'm pleased to see that I made the letter column, even if for only one sentence in your personal comments. Seeing as how I have a copy of that last issue of Doc Savage I'm inclined to agree with Richard Kyle, that story was really wild. Your picture shows you as looking younger then I thought. Since I knew you were a high school teacher I had thought of you as much older looking.

I've now seen the revived Spectre in Showcase. It would be interesting to see how DC treats him if he proves popular enough to get his own comic. From what I've heard of him I think his powers have been cut somewhat but even so no crook would be a match for him. I don't think even Superman would have a chance against him if they got into a fight. I think Fox did a good job on this first Spectre story. It certainly aroused my sense of wonder. Imagine someone big enough and powerful enough to hold a nova in his bare hands or fling comets aounds. You don't find things like this everday. The art was also good, not looking like Anderson's usual work. Did someone else ink his pencils? The Spectre actually looked mean and grim.

I see that according to Time the 1943 Batman serial has been re-released by Columbia as a 248 minute motion picture, which will probably hold the record as the longest film ever made unless they do the same with some other serial. Since Columbia plans to release it in twenty major cities, presumeably those with the most colleges in them, this probably lets out any town in Alabama. Wonder if it will be shown in Atlanta? I once saw one episode of a Batman serial but all I can remember of it is seeing Bruce Wayne and Dick Greyson being driven around by Alfred in the Wayne limousine. I wonder how the producers of the TV Batman will play the show. Will they play it straight, for laughs, or will they try a Man From Uncle approach? From what little I hear of it the last seems most likely. As far as I can see there's only one thing wrong with a Batman TV show, I probably won't be able to watch it. Montgomery has four TV stations so I should certainly expect to watch it if I was here. Only, if all go well I expect to start back to college in January and according to their catalog freshmen are not allowed to have TV sets in there rooms and I consider it a bit unlikely that the University will provide the dorms with one. Maybe for once I'll be lucky and get myself admitted as a sopomore with deficiencies and can then provide myself with a portable TV so I can then watch Batman on Birmingham's ABC station. I see where the producers say that the Batcave will be shown as having its own nuclear power plant. This brings up something I've often wondered about of late, just where does the Batcave

of the comics get its power from. Seems that no matter what sourde of power he uses Batman would have problems. If he got it from the local power company there would be questions about what Bruce Wayne did with all that power. If it has its own generator how does Bruce manage to get fuel for it without arousing suspicion? Whatever he does he would seem to have problems. If the Batmobile is also going to be nuclear powered that probably means that the old model will be used instead of the present sports car version. A welcome change indeed.

Isn't National planning to give this event some mention in their comics? So far I haven't seen a single mention of it in them, not even in Detective, Batman's home grounds. This brings up another point. According to The Comic Reader the show is scheduled to debut in January, yet TV Guide states that the show will start in December. Which is correct?

Batman never appeared on the Superman TV show but is that any reason why Superman shouldn't make occasional guest appearances on Batman's shows to pay Batman back for the occasional times he appeared on the Superman radio show?

It looks as if House of Mystery will be worth buying at last now that Dial H For Hero has debuted in it. I only hope future stories are at least as good as the first. Does anyone know who drew the TYCO ad that has been appearing in DC comics recently? I know I've seen the artist work before but I just can't place his name. Its quite frustrating. I've never liked the Legion of Super Heros before, yet for the first time I actually enjoyed one of their stories, the one that appeared in Adventure #340. I asked myself why I did this since the story was on the same level as all previous Legion stories and the only answer I could come up with was the art work. I never did like Forte's art, especially the way he drew faces, and this kept me off the comic. Now that Curt Swan has taken over the art it has improved greatly. It's still not a great comic, but it isn't any worse then many other National comics now. Its main trouble seems to be that the Legion of Super Heros is so big. Any writer with have troubles with a group this large.

The Strange Death of Batman was indeed strange but, not so strange as the appearence of the second Batman and Alfred. What fascinated me was how would the writer get himself out of the hole he had writen himself into with their appearence. After all, there are two very dead corpses who were supposed to be them. I can see how they might be able to explain away the appearence of the second Batman by claiming that there were really two Batman's to the general public, or by saying that Batman had been training someone to take his place in case anything happened to him. However, Alfred would be a different case all together would no possible way to explain away the appearence of a supposedly dead person, especially if someone thought exhume the dead Alfred and compare his fingerprints with the live one. In this case everyone would be dead certain that Bruce Wayne was really Batman. Another problem would arise if the dead Batman unmasked and his fingerprints compared with those of the living Bruce Wayne. One thing convienantly left unexplained was how the Batman of Earth 11 learned of the death of the Earth 1 Batman and how he traveled from Earth 11 to Earth 1. Pulled his intra-earth transporter out of his utility belt no doubt. I just thought of something, what happened to the Superman and Batman of Earth 11 that prevents the ~~XXX~~ JLA from meeting them at their annual JLA-JSA get togethers?

Does anyone know who the artist is who did Doby Gillis for DC. He's my current candidate for the role of Adam Austin in the "Who is Adam Austin Sweepstakes". At first I thought that Austin just might be the artist who draws the Blue Beetle for Charlton since there are some similarities between the way one draws the Blue Beetle and the way the other draws the Submariner. The fxtxx fact that there were no other similarities in there art could be explained away by Colleta's inking, I thought. However, I recently came across a Doby Gillis comic and noticed that the art in it looked very much like Austin's, so much like it that now I think whoever drew Doby Gillis is Adam Austin. In addition to which, he also works for DC, something I seriously dohbt if the Blue Beetle artist could ever do. This is another possible confirmation that the "Doby Gillis" artist is Adam Austin since Austin is rumored to be under contract to National.

Is the company that publishes Ace Books the same as that which published Ace comics or is this just a similarity in names? I wonder just how many companies which used to publish comics are still around under different names! Probably quite a few I would be willing to venture.

There was acomment in the last issue of "Masquerader" about the lower quality of current Disney comics as compared to what they were in the old days. "Gbbd Old Days" apparently being defined as the forties and early fifties. Well, I think that with the exception of Mickey Mouse all the established Disney comics have gotten over any slump in quality that they were in. I think that many recent issues can compare to older ones in quality in some cases they might even be better. I especially like two new Disney titles which have hit the stands within the last year or so, "The New Adventures of The Phantom Blot" and "Super Goof", both of which are very good comics. It's difficult to tell the Disney artist apart, for me it is anyway, but I think both of these are drawn by the same person. This brings up something I've long wondered about. How are those of you who can tell the Disney artist apart able to do it. I can make a rough guess that the same artist drew two different stories which appeared in Disney comics but, that alls it would be, a rough guess.

Does anyone have any Fawcett comics that he would be willing to trade for Australian comics? I need a lot of them, both for myself and for the fan I get tha Aussie comics from.

At the moment I'm not sure whether I will be able to continue in K-a after January. I may start college then and since I will have to work at all times I'm not attending classes or studying in order to pay my way through college I may not have time for K*a once I star attending. I have time now. I just don't use it the way I should which is why I allways havetrouble getting in my contributions.

RAINY DAYS*

Issue #6, for mailing with CAPA-Alpha December 1965

Edited by Don & Maggie Thompson (in that order, please, Jan & John Ryan)

*"Rainy Days Is Fust-Rate Fo' Visitin' Yo' Fren's." - P. Possum, circa 1948.

Now, when we name our KA contribution in such a warm fashion, how can you accuse us of being mean and nasty and crotchety? For shame.

And, for the record, I (Don) win arguments with Maggie with ease. The arguments she uses on you people are derived from discussions with me and many (most definitely not all) of her most telling points come from me.

The reason she does most of the writing in KA is that she doesn't write for a living and consequently has more ambition at day's end as regards typing. Besides, I'm lazy, but that weakens my argument, so ignore that point.

And everything Maggie writes is composed on paper and edited by yrs trly. My writing, this included, is done directly on stencil and edited by no one.

I sometimes wonder about married persons who are agog at our sharing of interests and responsibilities. We both write letters which represent the feelings of both of us; our KA contributions are also joint efforts, with only the phrasing reflecting the writer.

However, to assert my masculinity (something I rarely feel called upon to do; I have no doubts about it), I am taking the lead spot and the lion's share of this issue of KA. On your own heads be it, to coin a phrase.

Damned if I know why I feel so ambitious, unless it's because I have hit a plateau on the road to recovery. I was sliced open and sewed up to patch a hernia about five weeks ago, as this is written (Oct. 18), and I've only recently been able to indulge in anything more strenuous than deepbreathing.

Maggie tells me these margins are too wide. That's her editorial contrib for this issue. Note it well.

I'm hoping to cleverly sneak some mailing comments in here in cleverly-fashioned disguises so I can get full credit for them. Everybody but Jerry watch closely for them.

GLOAT I was probably one of the first comics fans to see Jules Feiffer's THE GREAT COMIC BOOK HEROES (Dial, $9.95 -- BUY IT). I was given an unbound, unstitched copy to review for the Cleveland Press. We'll have to buy a copy for our library when it comes on sale here (not yet) for the binding; portions of the unstitched copy will be beautifully framed when (and if, he noted sourly) we get our house.

-maggie gets the next page-

RYANS: Let it be noted that I'm functioning as typist here this time around--and that's about it, except for illos. Gee whiz. On to a letter of comment on RD from that Fellow Grouch, Dick Lupoff:

It seems to me that somewhere along the line, we established a policy--a capital "P" Policy--on distributing copies of Xero. And, as I remember it, we did it at the time of #7, which was the "Disaster Issue" which you seem to be referring to a little bit obliquely [in RD #5]. We had copies at the Phillyconf that fall. It came out in November, and we took the copies for the specific purpose of handing them to subscribers, thus saving ourselves postage, and took a large number of them because they had all been at Larry Shaw's house. And in order to get them to us, even though it involved an awful lot of mileage, it didn't involve much work for Larry for him to stick them all in his car, drive to the Phillyconf, hand them all to us, and we put 'em in our car... The Shaws handed us all of the Xeroes, and we took them back to New York. Meanwhile, we also handed them out to subscribers who happened to be in Philadelphia.

What happened was lots of other people happened to be around and came and snatched up copies, forcing money into our hands, and we ran short, and that was the issue where we went to so much trouble and expense buying copies back to send to subscribers.

Anyway, after that painful lesson, I think we set up the following priority list:

Obviously, top priority went to contributors and the writers of published letters.

Second priority went to people who were reviewed in the issue.

Trades were either third or fourth, and the other one of third or fourth was paid subscribers.

And what would have been last place was new subscribers, though we didn't have any copies for new subscribers at all, at that stage of the game.

But there's a rationale there which I really want to make clear; I want to go into it now. I will make a little speech about it, even though it's now several years after the fact.

What we were trying to do in the general circulation policy of Xero was to distribute the thing to participants; it was almost sort of an apa all in itself, or I guess "combozine" would be a better term. People didn't do their individual production work, of course, but, in essence, we had all of these people--a stable, if you will, of contributors--yourselves, Steve Stiles, Bhob Stewart, Chris Steinbrunner (even though he was only in one issue), Charlie Collins, all our regular letterhacks, Blish, Larry Harris for a while, Lin Carter, Bob Briney--oh, I could go on and on. You know who appeared in that fanzine... Avram Davidson...

Anyway, I'm not going through the whole list.

We were, all of us, making our respective contributions to that thing for one another's entertainment and gratification. And anybody who was "beyond the pale," anybody who wasn't a participant in any way or sense, just an outsider, was very distinctly a second-class citizen. And I had no particular sympathy for or interest in some kid in Sandusky who had a sticky 35¢ coin in his pocket and wanted a copy of Xero. I had no particular animosity or ill will towards such a kid, either, but I was not interested in him. This is not what Xero was for.

It was for participants. I don't think anybody could send his coins to Jerry Bails and subscribe to K-a, either, any more than he could subscribe to FAPA; it's put out by and for the people who are in it.

And that's the way Xero was.

And anybody who just wanted to come along with sticky money--well, if we had any spare copies, he could have one for his money. But that's not what we were doing it for.

Of course, I had even less sympathy for money-type purchasers when the McGeehan brothers started trying to buy up four, six, seven and eight and nine and ten copies of an issue, apparently realizing that the price would rise on these things, and they were interested in stockpiling batches batches of copies for speculative purposes. I realize that to tar all our cash subscribers with the same brush as the McGeehans is grossly unfair, but it's all part of the big picture.

And I guess that pretty well covers that point.

Except I want to make it clear that if we treated a plain cash-subscriber with less than eager welcome, this was by calculation, not by accident. The policy of copies for participants, rather than for cash purchasers, paid one magnificent dividend--in the form of The Two Flashes Meet the Purple Slag Heap /which Landon Chesney sent Dick in a--very successful--attempt to ensure his getting Xero, since he understood Dick didn't like to sell Xero on a cash basis/.

So if Dennis Richard thinks that we were less than enthusiastic over cash subscriptions, he's entirely right.

Incidentally, I think I am some sort of notorious figure in comics fandom, but I don't get the zines in which they berate me. I do find it rather annoying that comics fans don't follow the science-fiction-fannish convention of sending somebody a copy of a document in which you refer to him--particularly if you refer to him at any length and particularly particularly if you refer to him at any length in a derogatory fashion. You're aware, of course, that in science-fiction fandom, if you rip a guy up in a fanzine,

the least you do is send him a copy so he can make a reply. Apparently, comics fans don't follow this convention, or else they don't know where I am--or maybe they think I've died or moved out of the country and am incommunicado or have totally gafiated. None of which is true, of course.

If you'd care to and if you're looking for some kind of filler or announcement to make in X-a or CA, please tell the comics fans that this voice from the past has been heard from and would be very interested in seeing any documents in which he is blasted--or referred to in any other fashion, for that matter.

I don't guarantee to reply to these--although I might--but I really do think as a simple courtesy, if you're going to rip a guy up in print, you should let him know this and send him a copy, so that at least if anybody makes any baldly false statements about me that can be simply and briefly set straight, I think I would at least send a postcard and say, "Naw, I'm not a crotchety old guy in his 70's; I'm a crotchety old guy in his 30's!"--or, well, you know what I mean.

/And, on another subject, Dick said on his tape to us--/ Fawcett can't revive Captain Marvel because of the consent decree--and that covers the entire Captain Marvel mythos. When they went out of business, they sold rights to most of their properties to Charlton. You recall that Charlton continued Nyoka the Jungle Girl for a while--Ibis the Invincible, some of the westerns, Six Gun Western, and so on... They sold Hopalong Cassidy to National, but if Fawcett wants to get back in the comic book business, in the superhero business--for heaven's sake, all they have to do is call up Otto Binder and say, "Otto, we're back in business." I'm sure he'll be delighted and I'm sure he'll come up with a dilly for them.

So, all you people out there, if you've got a gripe about him, write:

Mr. Richard Lupoff
Merry Hill
Poughkeepsie, New York 12603

A NOTE ON THE ABOVE — Please forgive any errors in syntax, punctuation, and/or spelling. If present, they should not be ascribed to The Evil Mr. Lupoff; all of the preceeding Lupoffian comment was transcribed by Maggie from a tapeletter Dick sent us a short time ago. And let me tell you, transcribing from tape is one dirty job. (As who should know better than I, who recently finished transcribing a looooong interview with Carl Barks on tape--for a future issue of Comic Art?) Errors in the above (aside from matters of thought, logic, and the like--which errors, assuming they exist, must be blamed on DL) are my fault, so forget it. Or them.

Best wishes to you all. Now, back to DONALD A. THOMPSON.

In a burst of generosity, I've decided to share this page with whatsername. This is from both of us.

ALL US PATRIARCHS GOTTA STICK TOGETHER

No, John, we never meant any digs at Jerry to hurt him--we've merely indulged in Coulsonesque banter, and I trust Jerry knows this quite well. Shucks, we spent some of the more pleasant weekends in the past couple of years in the company of Jerry and Mrs. Bails. They are great hosts, fine people to watch old movies with, nice to eat out with, parents of delightful children, and generally good people to know. Jerry is one of the people we most enjoy discussing old comics with--and we have a ball with the new ones, too. Our opinions coincide to an almost frightening degree.

We've corresponded with the patriarch of "Comicdom" since the inception of A-E, indulging in nasty cracks back and forth and admiration ditto (we hope).

And if it weren't for Jerry, where would that old "Comicdom" be? CA would still be running--but we probably wouldn't have a circulation of 500. (Come to think of it, Jer, maybe you're not such a buddy after all...) And think of all the pleasant experiences we'd have missed--staying up till all hours counting Alley ballots, putting original art all over a display room, and getting Alley ballots on which to express our opinionated feelings. And, of course, creating Rainy Days in which to express even more flatly our opinionated feelings.

But please remember, all you people supposedly concerned over the possible barbs aimed your way from us, that the name of this publication is Rainy Days and that we're not dedicatedly mean. Oh, we get a bit vindictive when invincible ignorance tries to get a toehold. But that's not why we're in K-a and we try to keep it to a minimum (which is why we dropped the Moslander bit when we saw nothing was about to sink in and all about were snoring in their chairs--not because we feel any less strongly the evils of censorship).

We do see K-a as the meeting-place for most of the editors in comics fandom and, therefore, as the place to quash errors in fact and the like. But, aside from that, what the heck? It should be as loose an organization, as friendly an organization, as--and why not?--as fun an organization as possible. It should be and it just about is.

And hooray for Jerry Bails for starting K-a and for such as the Ryans for making it so much fun.

WE NOTE that John L. Goldwater, CMAA president, credits the Comics Code with the great public fascination with the comics today. "The self-regulation program of the industry has been an important factor in this rise in the prestige of the comics medium. 'Practically every article credits the Comics Code with having brought comics to a high level of decency and good taste,' Mr. Goldwater stated." Sure. You betcha. (And the quote--not the comment--is from the November 1965 CMAA Newsletter. Hooray.)

TRICON NEWS

The official mailing address for the 24th World Science Fiction Convention is:

24th World Science Fiction Convention
P. O. Box 1372
Cleveland, Ohio 44103

Cost of membership will be $3.00 if you plan to attend; it will be $2.00 for a non-attending or supporting membership. Send off your checks now to the above-mentioned address so that you'll get all progress reports on the con.

The convention officially opens Friday, September 2, but the registration desk will be open Thursday, September 1 at 6:00 pm and there will be a warm-up party at 8:00 pm that evening. From then on, you should be very busy; the con will run September 2 through September 5--a nice, long weekend.

Official con hotel will be the Sheraton-Cleveland--right bang on Public Square, convenient to just about everything in downtown Cleveland (you couldn't be any more centrally located). If you're coming in by train, in fact, all you'll do to get there is walk up the ramp from the train station to street level and there you are. Plane travellers can ride to the hotel in the hotel's airport limousine. Coming by bus? A very short taxi ride will get you to the Sheraton-Cleveland. And if you prefer the comfort of your car for con-travel, the hotel has free 24-hour parking for all its guests. (If you're being really low and not staying at the con hotel, you can park in Municipal Parking in a guarded lot for the price of a 25¢ exit fee.) The hotel free parking includes unlimited in-and-out privileges at no extra charge. And room rates at the Sheraton-Cleveland are quite reasonable for the area and quality of that hotel--$7.85 for a single, $13.85 for a double, and $16.00 for a twin bedroom (all that being per night, of course). All rooms are air conditioned with private bath, radio, and TV.

And around the immediate area of the hotel there are all kinds of restaurants for all kinds of budgets--from a Royal Castle for the cheap instant hamburger set to the Kon-Tiki for the gourmet types.

Guest of Honor of the Tricon will be L. Sprague de Camp and if you've been reading comic books so exclusively that you haven't heard of him, you'd better come up for air now. An excellent choice, we think, and there are few better speakers and nicer chaps around.

The Tricon foolishly will not be charging for the first table you may desire to rent (each about 3 feet wide and 6 feet long) in the large Display Room, but $5 will be charged for each additional table. If you want to sell some of your collector's items, here's the place to do it; get in touch with Bill Thailing at the address above. If you come but to buy, here's the place to do it, too. Start saving your money now.

There'll be parties all over the place; plan now to hold your own in your own hotel room. And the program should have much to interest comics fans as well as science-fiction fans. Bill Thailing is working on a comics fan panel at the moment, and the costume ball alone should have much comics-oriented material.

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BARSH? #5 by Dan Alderson October 31,1965

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RYL #43

Two items in Philip K. Dick's latest science fiction novel, "Project Plowshare" [which has started in the November 1965 issue of Worlds of Tomorrow and will be concluded in the January 1966 issue] aroused my interest as a comics fan. The basic situation of the story is that certain psionically talented people, called "mediums", are used by both major Power Blocs ("Peep-East" & "Wes-bloc") as Terror Weapon Fashion Designers, to continually devise new & "better" weapons. Such mediums are rare, and thus have considerable ability to dictate terms to their employer governments, but the leaders of Wes-bloc tell the central character of the story, Weapons Fashion Designer Lars Powderdry, that he had better do as they tell him, since they have three more potential mediums waiting to take over if Powderdry proves uncooperative. The first item in the story that struck me as interesting was the description of one of these 'super-powered' background characters: "[a] small boy, fat as Tweedledee, sucking a lollypop, very disagreeable." I feel convinced that the resemblance to Herbie Popnecker is not coincidental. In any case, the second item is much more definite Powderdry is in the 'protective custody' of the KVB (the Peep-East secret police) and decides to buy a magazine to annoy his 'keepers'. The text proceeds:

" "How about this?" he asked the KVB men, holding up a comic book printed in cheap, lurid colors *"The Blue Cephalopod Man from Titan."* As near as he could tell, it was the worst rubbish on sale....

As the five of them walked on, one of the KVB men asked him, "You normally read such fare, Mr. Lars?" His tone was polite.

Lars said, "I have a complete file of them back to volume one, number one."

There was no response; just a formal smile.

"It has declined, though," Lars added. "During the last year."

He had of course never examined such garbage before. It was interesting. The Blue Cephalopod Man, in a long and much honored tradition, burst buildings, knocked out crooks, disguised himself at both ends of each episode as Jason St James, a colorless computer-operator. This , too, was standard, for reasons lost in the obscurity of the history of comic book art, but having somehow to do with Jason St James' girl friend, Nina Whitecotton, who wrote a gourmet column for the Monrovia *Chronicle-Times*, a mythical homeopape [=newspaper, c. 2004 A.D.] cranked forth for sale throughout West Africa.

Miss Whitecotton, interestingly, was a Negro And so were all the other humans in the comic strip, including the Blue Cephalopod Man himself when he put on mortality as Jason St. James. And the locale was, throughout each episode, "a large metropolitan area somewhere in Ghana."

The comic book was aimed at an Afro-Asia audience. By some fluke of the worldwide autonomic [=robotic] distributing mechanism, it had shown up here in Iceland

In the second episode the Blue Cephalopod Man temporarily was drained of his abnormal powers by the presence of a meteor of zularium, a rare metal "from the Betelgeuse system". [Interstellar travel has not yet been developed in 2004.] And the electronic device by which the Blue Cephalopod Man's sidekick, Harry North, a physics professor at Leopoldville, restored those lost powers, just in time to nab the monsters from "Proxima's fourth planet, Agakana," was a construct astonishingly like his [Powderdry's] own weapons design item 204.

Strange! Lars continued reading.

In episode three, the terminal episode of the comic book, another machine peculiarly familiar to him - he could not precisely place it, however - was brought into play by the cunning assistance of timely Harry North. The Blue Cephalopod Man triumphed again, this time over things from the sixth planet of Orionus. And a good thing, too, because these particular things were an abomination; the artist had outdone himself.

"You find that interesting?" one of the KVB men inquired.

I find, Lars thought, it interesting inasmuch as the writer and/or illustrator has made use of KACH [an independent world-wide spy organization] to pirate a few of my most technologically interesting ideas. I wonder if there are grounds for a civil suit."

Thus we see that, at least according to Philip K. Dick, the situation in the comic book industry will not change very much by 2004, still containing companies rather like Charlton, further imitations of Superman, distribution problems, and charges of copyright violation.

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First *Justice League of America* #39. Then *Batman* #176. And now *Superman* #183 How far will this hideous blight spread? Of course, I am glad to see some old reprints emerging, and hope that 80 Page Giant #18 is highly successful and sets a trend (even the JLA 80 Page Giants might eventually reprint JSA stories), but I am most emphatically not glad to see reprint comics intruded into the sequential numbering of various National comics.

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I never would have thought that the Viking Prince would reappear in *Our Army at War*, but there he is in #162, big as life and twice as invulnerable. Teamed with Sgt. Rock, he is trying to get himself killed in battle in order to return to Valhalla, from which he has been temporarilly banished by Odin. He is slightly hampered by a curse from Odin: "I command neither metal, nor wood-neither fire nor water harm thee!" Thus, German machine gun bullets, hand grenades, etc., being composed of metal and "fire", have no effect on the VP. Of course, flame throwers, artillery shells, land mines, and the like will be equally ineffective, and metal and water will presumably refuse to conduct harmful electricity to him, so in his World War II context poison gas would seem to be the Viking Prince's best bet (if Odin wants to get sticky about technicalities of dying "in battle", the Prince can go out fighting Germans in gas masks!). Of course, this particular form of invulnerability would not be nearly as dificult to defeat in a modern environment: nowadays we could dispose of VP by means of focussed ultrasonic beams, nerve gas, laser rays, or bacteriological agents. And of course Alley Oop could smash the Prince's head with his stone axe, or just beat him to death with his (Oop's) flesh and blood fists &/or feet.

In several ways, the story "The Prince and the Sergeant" [two episodes, 15pp. + the cover, in *Our Army at War* #162, to be concluded in #163] fails to assist our suspension of disbelief. First of all, the Viking Prince speaks "comic-book archaic English" (his inconsistent use of 'thee' & 'thou', though not quite as bad as that in *Son of Vulcan*, is annoying ... and "how can thou diest?" instead of "how canst thou die?" ... oh, well) whereas English intelligible to modern speakers of this language did not develop until after the Odinic religion had been superseded by Christianity. But I'm willing to concede this point, since otherwise communication problems would have bogged down the story. But there is more. Immediately upon awakening from a multi-century sleep frozen in ice inside a cave, the Viking Prince attacks and destroys a large group of Nazi soldiers, calling them "huns from the east". Having thus saved Sgt. Rock's life, the Prince joins him in his 'suicide' mission in hopes of being killed by the Germans. Now, it seems reasonable to me that the Viking Prince would take the side of the underdog (in this case, Sgt. Rock), particularly since he wants to be killed in battle as quickly as possible, but why in the world should he call the Nazis "huns"? There have been several

peoples called Huns, but the only two that a Viking might have been familiar with were the hordes of Attila (who was quite widespread in Teutonic legend) and the Magyars (who eventually developed into the modern nation of Hungary, and who had a powerful and independent kingdom in roughly the same area as present Hungary contemporary with the Vikings) And neither of these two peoples were at all like the Germans, with whom the Vikings were quite well acquainted. Further, although both groups of 'Huns' did arrive from Asia in historical times, the Germans had been in Europe as long as the Vikings (in fact, both are derived from the same Teutonnic cultural-linguistic sources), and the areas with Viking settlements extended (in Russia) considerably east of the German lands Even if we pass over this item as a bit of WW II invective that has leaked over into the Viking Prince's mind along with some knowledge of English during his long, cold sleep in the ice, there remains one simply unendurable action on the part of the author: he has abandoned the Prince's original name (Jon), and has not replaced it with anything at all acceptable! Everyone -- the Prince himself, his Valkyrie loved one, his opponents in battle both living & in Valhalla, and even Odin himself -- absolutely everyone calls him "(the) Viking Prince". And this is total nonsense! Are all of these Vikings so ignorant or unthinking as to know of no other Princes among them? All Viking heroes in genuine saga & legend are called by their names, and if they have titles they are (more or less) specific ones: Sigurd, Prince of the Volsungs; Helgi Hundingsbana, Prince of the Ylfings; Beowulf, Prince of the Geatas; Frodi & Hrolf Kraki, Kings of Leire in Denmark; and even the modern Valiant, Prince of Thule

At any rate, the Norse mythology exhibited in the story is about the best I've seen in a comic book, although they still haven't got Odin right: perhaps the Comic Code won't allow them to show him one-eyed, but they could at least depict him as an old man (and, come to think of it, if Colonel Fury can get away with one eye, why not Odin?) Other than this problem of Odin, the only mythological nits I can find to pick are the following: 9.3 [page 9, panel 3] - the King of the Frost Giants is Hrym, not Frym; 9.5 - the source of food in Valhalla is the Boar Saehrimnir, not Shrimmer; 10.1,10.4,12.4, etc. (but not 10.6,11.5, etc.) - the Old Norse term usually 'translated' in English as "Valkyrie,Valkyries" is "Valkyria,Valkyrior", not "Valkyrior,Valkyriors", although the 'semi-translation' "Valkyrior Maiden,Valkyrior Maidens" is reasonable; and finally, the Norse myths & legends are far from unanimous on the potential marital status of the Valkyrior, although of course this can't be considered an error on the part of the National Comics author.

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And speaking of Norse mythology, I have a reply to Maggie Thompson (RAINY DAYS #5, page 4, K-a #13) and if this be a Mailing Comment so be it. The question concerns the varient functions of Thor's striking his Hammer against the ground various numbers of times. True, in order to strike the ground twice he must first strike it once, but there are two basically distinct ways of justifying the observed fact that Thor's whipping up a storm (2 thumps) does not entail his changing identities (1 thump). First of all, simplest seeming & most scientific, we could have (as indicated by Maggie) a certain short interval of time, say half a second, which we call the modulus. Then the 'code' for "change identities" becomes one thump of the Hammer, followed by a thumpless interval equal to one modulus, and the 'code' for "generate a storm" is two thumps, separated by a time interval less than one modulus and followed by a thumpless interval equal to one modulus (of course, there are to be no thumps in the intermediate interval either). This will solve the problem of lack of determinacy or overlapping of signals, and will have only the relatively minor problem of slowing the Hammer's reaction time to one modulus. However, I doubt that this solution is the 'correct' one. Instead, we must consider the fundamental nature of Thor and his Hammer. They are not, essentially, techno-

logical constructs like IBM machines, but are magical instead (and by this I do not refer to their mythological source — the supposedly scientific-sourced Flash, Superman, Green Lantern, etc — suffer from this same magical contagion of their properties). Thus, the Hammer is not bound by the scientific laws of immediate cause and information theory; it can take account not only of the number of times it has, in the immediate past, been bashed against an appropriate surface, but also of the intent of the basher, just as it can take account of the identity of the basher, and in particular his moral status, in the process of 'deciding' what effect to produce. Both Mr. Hyde and the evil duplicate of Thor who once menaced Our Hero were unable to utilize the Hammer effectively, not because they were unable to lift it to tap or throw it (Hyde had it in its mobile walking-stick form, and the anti-Thor was able to heft it[or more precisely two duplicates of it]), but because it "knew" that they were not Worthy. A further important factor is that Thor, Dr. Don Blake, & the Hammer are tied together in a complex manner that can not be fully understood from the information that we have been given by Marvel as yet. When Hyde tapped the Walking-Stick on the floor once, it was Blake that turned into Thor. Naturally, Hyde would not have turned into Thor, but one would have expected that, in his hands, it would have refused to work at all. This brings up two interesting questions: 1) if an Unworthy person taps the Walking-Stick, does Don Blake have to be near by to turn into Thor & if so how near by?, and 2) what happens if a Worthy person other than Blake taps the Walking-Stick? If Thor's mortal identity could be shifted to someone else, and if the property of loving Jane Foster was not also transfered, then Thor could Grant the Gift of Forgetfulness to Don Blake & Jane Foster and they could be married, and they, Thor & Odin could live happily ever after. It seems obvious to me that it was not originally intended for Don Blake to actually become Thor on a full-time permanent basis, but the two personalities have by now so commingled (or rather, Thor's personality has so thoroughly overwhelmed Don Blake's) that separation seems increasingly infeasible. If it were possible to perform this delicate psychological operation, the next question to arise would be that of choosing a new mortal identity. Odin would seem to have full control of the situation (as shown by the fact that, as in Thor's battle with the Hulk and in the Trial of the Gods in Skornheim, Odin enabled Thor to overcome the requirement of touching the Hammer once a minute or reverting to his mortal form), so perhaps, on the basis of experience, he would decide that Thor doesn't really need an alter ego after all. On the other hand, if Odin did want Thor to be associated with some mortal, or if somehow he has no choice in the matter, then my choice to replace Don Blake is ... Tony Stark! Stark has renounced the woman he loves for reasons other than being Thor, he is certainly Worthy, and turning into Thor by tapping a walking-stick would provide a fine remedy for his heart injury when his transistors are run-down and no source of electricity is at hand. This leaves the question of who is to take over as Iron Man, and again the answer is at hand .. Happy Hogan! Of course, he now has a Power of his own, but it seems reasonable (as of *Tales of Suspense* #74) that it will be necessary to drain the Enervator energy out of him in order to return him to sanity. If so, he might require a Tony Stark chestplate to provide the energy to keep him going. This might make him decide to renounce Pepper Potts just as Stark once did & for the same reason. Since Pepper has been transfering her affections from Stark to Iron Man, and since, as we recall, Happy discovered awhile back that she really cared for him, we have once again the standard Marvel situation of two main characters in love with each other but kept apart by causes which are largely psychological. But of course there is ample opportunity for further complications: Mr. Hyde and others can continue to plague the now defenceless Dr. & Mrs. Blake; Tony Stark can double for Hogan as Iron Man from time to time; and perhaps turning back & forth into Thor, or Asgardian super-medical prowess, could cure Stark's heart trouble, thus ending the justification for his renunciation of Pepper (whom, we recall, Happy has now re-

nounced, and who will thus have undoubtedly ricocheted back to caring for Stark) and providing a new source of friction between Thor & Odin. And meanwhile, we can have Happy gradually learning the ropes of Iron-Mansmanship, with the added point of interest that he is not only threatened by being supplied with too little power from his armor & thus dying, but also by being supplied with too much power from the same source & thus turning into a dangerous monster. . . . But, as I said above, Thor's & Don Blake's psyches are by now so thoroughly enmeshed in each other that I doubt that even Stan Lee will dare (or care) to attempt to disentangle them.

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Another item in K-a #13 stirs me to comment, namely Don Thompson's "Open Letter to Mort Weisinger (Who Doesn't Pay Any Attention to Closed Ones)" (RAINY DAYS #5, page 10). Don complains of Superman's use of various subterfuges in his competition with Rokk and Sorban, super-villains & super-gamblers of the planet Ventura, as detailed in "The Super-Gamble with Doom" & "The Duel of the Super-Gamblers" in *World's Finest Comics* #150, June 1965. He goes as far as calling Kal-el "Super-cheat", and one gets the impression that he would wholeheartedly endorse Barry Allen's actions in "The Mightiest Punch of All Time", *The Flash* #153, also June 1965, in which the super-villain Professor Zoom controls the minds of the City Council of Flash's home city, Central City, causing them to pass a law making the use of super-speed illegal; whereupon Flash became unable to use his super-speed and was severely hampered in defeating Zoom. My opinion, on the other hand, is exactly opposite: I approve of Superman's actions and deprecate those of the Flash, for reasons which I will procede to enumerate. The distinction at hand is that between a sort of naive moral absolutism represented by Flash's "right or wrong, it is the law!" and by Tiny Yokum's "I always obeys all rules, irregardless!", and the more realistic and, to my way of thinking, more mature morality of the sometimes bitterly hard choice of the lesser evil as represented, albeit in a somewhat crude & "comic-book-ish" manner, by Superman's decisions to "cheat" in the situations imposed upon him by the Venturans. [Furthermore, the picture is somewhat clouded by the fact that Superman's use of the "super-magnetic" asteroid seems to me to be solely use of perfectly valid information which the alien didn't happen to have, and was accepted as such, and in no sense as cheating, by the aliens themselves. However, this is a minor point and aside from the central issue.] I would fully and vehemently agree with Don if Superman had cheated the Venturans, or anyone else, for his own gain, or to deprive them of what was rightfully theirs, or if he had set up the "contests" in which he engaged. But none of these situations prevailed in any degree; instead, Superman was continually and reluctantly forced into progressively more unpleasant positions by threats to the life of, at first, his friend Batman and later the entire Earthly human race. His choice was not the artificially isolated & simple one of "playing the game" according to the Venturan rules, or of Cheating; it was that of allowing the utterly evil & disinterested Venturans to destroy the Earth & everyone on it, or of finding some way, any way, of preventing this frightful "crime against humanity". I do, in fact, agree with Don that this story has an unpleasant moral element, but it is not in Superman's behavior. Instead, it consists of the fact that the Venturan gamblers can and do destroy whole planets, killing people by the countless billions, solely for their own amusement - and that they get away with this continuing and horrific record of atrocity because they are too powerful for anyone to stop or punish them. I would very much like to see a sequal in which some appropriate interstellar authority (in other words, the Green Lantern organization) brings the Venturan rulers to justice. In any case, the common ingredient of the two stories under discussion is, in particular, the question of the nature of obedience to law, as embodied in Central

City municipal ordinances in one case and in the dictates of the hereditary ruling class of Ventura in the other. And I feel sure that any reasonable person, including Don Thompson, will agree that there are limits beyond which it is immoral to obey the law, and that, although there is extensive room for disagreement as to the exact location of these limits, laws whereby billions of innocent persons are murdered for the amusement of a few "gamblers" fall far outside them. The law involved in the Flash story is, of course, far more of a moot point; since Flash was able to defeat Zoom without violating the law, all ended well, and I agree that Flash's prestige, & even self-respect, were enhanced by his managing to keep within the technical bounds of the law. What I object to is the implication that, whatever the law might have required of him, and whatever monstrous villainy Zoom or anyone else might have committed that only Flash's violation of the law could have prevented, Flash had abdicated all moral responsiblity and could not have violated the law no matter what he believed, thought, or felt. This sort of "law-abiding robot" is hardly the ideal type of ethical structure for a Hero - to carry his ideas out to their logical conclusion, Flash should be unable to save a child from being run over by an out-of-control truck if the action involved violating the traffic laws by jay walking (the many ways in which Flash could circumvent this particular difficulty are clearly irrelevant to the point at hand).

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For those who are reading this as part of a stapled-together APA, I wish to apologize for the excessively narrow left-hand margins on the odd-numbered pages. I stupidly inserted the ditto masters into the ditto machine in the manner appropriate to even-numbered pages, and the masters have faded far too much to run another set. The only solution, other than retyping all three odd-numbered pages, would be to generate a 'zeroth' & a seventh page [& I don't have the time or energy to do either], or to leave them blank [a procedure of which the noble Central Mailer rightfully disaproves]. I shall strive to avoid repeating the error

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In *Journey Into Mystery* #124, we see that Zeus has changed considerably since his first appearance in *Journey Into Mystery Annual* #1. I much prefer the older version, with red hair and a highly distinctive haircut, to the present one, which is nearly indistinguishable from the white-haired Odin. Not only would I prefer to keep the two "omnipotent" god-monarchs & hero-fathers as distinct as possible, but the earlier version of Zeus strikes me as somehow appropriate, undoubtedly because it is based on some prominent artistic depiction of Zeus that I have seen at one time or another, although I can't consciously identify the source.

As for Hercules himself, he seems about as closely related to the traditional Ἡρακλῆς [Aha! I notice, for the first time, that the Greek alphabet on the IBM Selectric Symbol type element lacks a "final sigma". Tch, tch.], or, more appropriately since Greek lower-case letters were not developed until the 7th or 8th century A.D., ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ , as the Marvel Thor is to the traditional ΘΗΡ Of course, it should be Zeus & Herakles, or Jupiter & Hercules, but this is a minor notational matter. What I object to is the deprivation of Hercules of his notable traditional weapons: the invulnerable hide of the Nemean lion, which served as shield & armor; the massive wooden club; and the bow & arrows, the latter poisoned with the blood of the Lernean hydra. And the Golden Mace that has replaced them looks much more like the decorative ceremonial maces of the 14th to 17th centuries than the deadly mediaeval weapon of that name (a worthy Herculean weapon, that!).

-7

HEAVY WATER

№ 8

DEC. 1965

Written by Fred Patten, and published on the LASFS Rex Rotary, November 28, 1965.
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Address: 1825 Greenfield Avenue, Los Angeles, California, 90025. Phone: 213 GR 3-6321.

Pan-PacifiCon (Los Angeles, Tokyo, Sidney) in L.A. in 1968! Salamander Press #137.

Back when I first joined CAPA-alpha, I predicted that a large part of my activity might consist of reprinting articles I'd written concerning comic books, that I'd published in non-Comic Fandom fanzines, where they'd gone pretty much unappreciated. As it's happened, I haven't gotten around to any of these yet because of being inspired to write on other things. However, here's the first of these reprints, a rundown on a comic-book motion picture that various members of Los Angeles science-fiction fandom once hoped to make. (Rewritten slightly, to weed out unintelligible in-group references. The article was called "All In Chaos For A Dime", and appeared in the eleventh issue of my fanzine, FOOFARAW.)

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In my latest stirring of the midden that constitutes my living quarters, I unearthed an almost-forgotten bundle of notes marked "Comics Movie". Heigh-ho for fannish dreams; this one never really got off the ground at all. Still, it was fun to plan, and as I know some of you are interested in anything dealing with comics, I herewith present the story of our too-good-to-be-true comics movie. (Besides, once I get this written up, I can toss these old notes out from underfoot.)

I suppose it all started when Bruce Pelz introduced comic books to LA Fandom back around the end of 1961. Not that it's Bruce's fault, you understand; I'm sure it wasn't his idea to encourage the local fans to go pawing through his collection of the old magazines. But that's the reaction it produced in about half a dozen of us. I suppose it was nostalgia for the bygone days of our youth that started us off (cries of, "I remember this one! I must've been 9 years old when ..."); but after a few weeks of reading Bruce's comics, we six began developing an interest in the field on our own. This was at the time that the newly-developed Comics Fandom burst onto our fandom's awareness; I suppose that helped. At any rate, by early '62, when the time came for those of us who were going to the ChiCon [1962 World Science Fiction Convention, in Chicago] to start planning our costumes for the Costume Ball, we decided to all go as a group, disguised as various members of the old Justice Society of America, a vigilante band of assorted superheroes appearing in ALL-STAR COMICS between 1941 and 1950.

The idea was just a throwaway at first; we all had fun at the Con, but that was the end of it. But though a couple of our group discarded their costumes almost immediately after the Ball, most of us hung on to ours to wear once more at the LASFS [the Los Angeles local fan club] Halloween Masquerade coming up in another month. Besides saving us the trouble of making new costumes for the LASFS Party, this would give Bruce

the chance to get photos of us, which he'd missed getting at the ChiCon. I suppose that's when the notion of a comics movie began to take form: one of us noted the prices that the Comics Fans were willing to pay for old comics or even just photos of old comics covers, and wondered how much they'd be willing to spend for color prints of real people in real superhero costumes? And if we were going to take any pictures in costume at all, why stop at portrait poses? From here, the jump to the idea of a comics movie was but a step.

So for around three months between November 1962 and March 1963, we kicked around the idea of a comics movie. It would star the old costumed superheroes and supervillains, of course, and would be a satire on the standard comic sf menace plot. Most of our planning consisted of brainstorming various sight gags to work into the basic plot somehow. As it turned out, we never really got to the point of working out a finished script because it became evident the minute we began to consider the project at all seriously that the whole thing was impossible. We had almost nothing to work with; there were never more than a dozen people interested in the project the whole time, which wasn't nearly enough for a cast, let alone a technical crew. None of us had the time or materials to make large numbers of complicated costumes. We couldn't afford enough equipment to shoot the movie if we had the costumes; and even if we had all this, we had no place to shoot the movie. (We also had our half-completed Persian Fantasy film that needed finishing, if we had any cash, materials, or labor to spare.) Few of us were really happy at the notion of parading around in public in comic book costumes, anyway. Finally, any movie dealing with superheroes would have to have a fair amount of special effects work in it, and none of us felt we had the equipment or the ability to do much more than a mediocre job of this. So after a little more wishful dreaming, we let the idea drop into oblivion.

The comics movie is completely forgotten now. Most of the few costumes we had from the ChiCon masquerade have long since been broken up into their component parts for use in other costumes. But the comics movie did have a gaudy charm about it, and it seems a shame to see all our ideas completely discarded. I still think it might've been a reasonably profitable idea to arrange a few still action poses in the costumes we had, and sell prints to the Comics Fans, who will apparently pay unbelievably high prices for anything connected with the field. Possibly some of the other Comics Fans among us will consider it worth their while to do something with these ideas. If so, good luck — and I'd like to see a copy of your work.

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Here are the notes themselves, with editorial comments in [brackets]. The first is a brief outline that Bjo Trimble typed somewhere around the end of 1962, summing up what ideas we'd had so far, and pointing out the areas we needed to work on:

COMIC BOOK MOVIE
(Utilizing the "Justice Society of America" costumes)

Projected shooting date: Easter vacation (or Spring Recess, or whatever)

Suggest: use color film, silent: title cards. (Color because the costumes are in primitive colors, which will be too dark in b&w, and also to keep the "comic book" all-in-color-for-a-dime feeling. Without sound, would it be expensive?)

Length? No shooting script as yet. Need one by the first of March, yes?

Costumes already on hand:

Flash	Dr. Fate	Wonder Woman
Green Lantern	Dr. Mid-Nite	The Sandman [Old costume, with gasmask.]
Hawkman	Hourman	

Costumes to possibly borrow: and possible fans who could wear them:

Captain Marvel
Mary Marvel
Black Canary
Flash
Prince Ibis
Princess Taia
Batman
Robin
Spiderman

[These were comic book costumes that had been made by non-LA fans that we hoped to borrow, which would've given us that much more to work with. I won't list the projected fans to wear 'em, as you wouldn't know any of the people. The extra Flash costume (Fred Norwood's) would've allowed us to show him at two places at once, "moving at super speed so fast you couldn't see him".]

Other JSA and comic costumes possible:

Harlequin
Lois Lane
Woozy Winks *or* Doiby Dickles
Starman
Plastic Man
Superman
The Atom

Other characters needed: extras, and villains, mostly.

Wonder Woman needs a huge male to overpower and subdue.
A Mad Scientist, &/or an evial Oriental Menace.
A Dangerous Female.

Any other names to suggest? Actors or characters? This should give everyone some ideas for sight gags and a general script.

GET TO WORK§!

Basic JSA story lines usually took up the whole comic book, and went something like this:

Meeting of JSA (and any associate members) (often, the associates came in at the last moment to the rescue, without having made an earlier appearance) during which a letter is read, asking for help.
(or a military figure tells of the problem, and the failure to cope with same) (or Good Scientist tells of stolen formula, which is now believed to be in (a.) an Unfriendly Country, (b.) hidden on another planet, (c.) held, along with GS's Beautiful Daughter, right here in This Country, or (d.) in another time continuum.
(or there is an outright crime breakout where one or more of the JSA disappears on the spot or some such overt action against the group.)

Everyone splits up (nowadays, being more prudent, they usually split into pairs to do their tracking, but the old days had more pages, and thence more time to spend on each individual) and takes off on his or her own ideas for Seeing Justice Done.

Short, individual adventures for each JSA member, with always one end; each one gets vanquished (for the nonce, don't worry) by the villain/s and dumped in one spot for Easy Disposal later. This routine goes on until there is only one JSA member left running loose.

The remaining JSA member rescues the rest of them, they all defeat the baddies, everyone is Properly Rewarded, and they go back to the meeting place, presumably to wait for mail call.

All kinds of sight gags are possible. We have no reverence for anything! Of course, the comic book-hero's penchant for undressing and getting into costume will bring all sorts of gags to mind.

Wonder Woman, who is Diana Prince (and a WAC), has the habit of disrobing, while running down the hall of the military building in which she works. (Her commanding officer runs a remarkably loose ship; he has never once gotten her for going AWOL, much less suggested that leaving her uniform in the hall is at least slightly unmilitary and subject to some embarrassment on occasions of surprise inspections.)

WW should be shown dashing down the hall, at least once, and tearing off her clothes to reveal — for an instant -- some sexy black lace dainty-do instead of the expected uniform.

Figure some gimmicks on the "changing clothes in a telephone booth" gag.

If there is to be a Superman, we need a Lois Lane to fall off of ledges, get caught be villains, and in general be the obnoxious female she is in the comics.

We need a Special Effects man; where do we get a glass plane?

A plot is not nearly as necessary -- the comics have done nicely without one for years -- as lots of color and action. The villain should be a costume character, too, if possible.

It would be best to use what costumes we could borrow and have on hand rather than make new ones; there isn't the time or the inclination to make many more costumes. Making a costume or two for the villains is another thing, however.

Who is our crew on this?

The question also comes up; who pays for this? We will have to have cash in hand to buy the film.*

We need a script so we know how much film to buy.

We need script girl, lights, grips, effects, costumers, and lots of extra people. Will we get volunteers (with money)? Who will be on cameras?

Locations will be the problem (we've got a swimming pool, anyway) because we can't trot around in these weird costumes without attracting considerable attention.

Outdoor locations would be good, tho, if we can go into the back Griffith Park area, or some local canyons (hidden hideouts? a crater of the moon?)

Best keep everything in the present, if possible, because faking future or other-time-world backgrounds will cost too much.

Alex Bratmon just volunteered to be The Joker (a fine bit of type casting if I ever saw it!) who is a Batman villain, but who cares? We have such a mishmash of comic heroes that it really doesn't matter where we get out colorful villains.

One wild location might be Nupike [local carnival/amusement park], where we could pretty well run around in anything. If we picked the proper times, when the pike was not too busy, we could get cooperation from concessions. [Hah, we got the bum's rush when we tried shooting at Nupike on another occasion.]

* Fred suggests that if comic fans are silly enuf to pay $6.00 for an old comic book, would they not pay for stills of costumes from the movie, and thereby help pay the expenses? It might be worth a try. Still cameraman?

We would, of course, let comic fans know about the movie; there is good possibility of rentals and outright sale here.

Let's discuss this; we need a show of interest in the first place, and info on whose camera equipment we have to work with. Then we can contact people for costumes, acting, and camera crews. Please drop me a card, at least, to let me know if YOU are interested in spending a weekend or so on getting out something like this.

This will not -- obviously -- be a Work of Art, but it should be well-filmed and fun, not to mention colorful and quick. It could also be a good movie.

Suggestions, ideas, and opinions requested, as usual.

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And there you have Bjo's notes. The meeting was held [in early Feb., 1963], and I think that's where it was decided that we couldn't afford to make a regular color movie. We kicked around the idea of telling the story as a series of still slides, which would be easier and less costly to film (or re-film, if anything went wrong on the first take). This had another advantage in that we could finish a basic story in a hurry, shooting the opening and closing sequences and a couple of individual adventures, and then add in other individual adventures at our leisure. This is no trouble with a series of slides, whereas cutting and resplicing a film is more work. And we could sell prints of the slides individually or in sequence lots to the Comics Fans. This idea finally fell through too, though.

[And I'm going to cut this article short at this point for now, because I want to get in some comments on K-a #14. I'll finish it up next issue. The above covers the history of our uncompleted movie; the remaining material is mostly a collection of ideas for various individual sequences and gag shots.]

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copies). 150 lira (24¢ U.S.) each, bi-weekly, 27 x 22 1/2 cm., and in beautiful color. L'Avventuroso il principe Valiant consists of old Prince Valiant strips, and an illustrated textual story in the middle of the book. This is issue #3, of a series that is apparently supposed to be disassembled and reassembled as a whole when all the issues are collected; it starts at page 65 of the comic strip reprints, and goes to page 80, is interrupted for pages 33-48 of the textual story, than resumes the strip reprints for pages 81-96. The reprints of the Sunday strip are ##65 to 96, April 7 to December 11, 1938, by the way. The other magazine is Gordon #27, consisting of full-color reprints of the Flash Gordon daily strip, September 25, 1942, to February 10, 1943. This constitutes the first 64 pages of the magazine; the remainder is chapters 3-4 (pages 17 to 24) of Verne's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. Covers on both Valient and Gordon are by a local artist, M. Caria. Hmm, that about completes my holdings of foreign comics, except for some South Korean issues a friend got me while he was over there in the Army. These are a series of three 100-page, 20 x 14 1/2 cm. booklets, printed in blue & white, containing a running story apparently set during Cortez' conquest of Mexico. As I don't understand a single character of the Korean alphabet, that's all I can say about them (except that the art is pretty crude).

Jerry Bails — I hope Agent X does continue reporting. The reports are written in a pleasingly compact style that makes them very easy to absorb.

John Ryan — Your random thoughts & comments are always welcome. Yes, I'd be glad to see a rundown of the Aussie Walt Disney comics. As you say, it's always nice to get any authoritative comic book data, even on titles you're not overly interested in yourself. ## When you do get over here, be sure to stop over in Los Angeles to meet all the local science-fiction and Comics Fans; myself, Phil Castora, Dan Alderson, Bjo, and many others who aren't active in CAPA-alpha but will be glad to meet you. If you make it anywhere around 1968, the World Science Fiction Convention will probably be in Los Angeles that year; s-f fans in LA, Tokyo, and Sidney are uniting in backing Los Angeles as the site of the first Pan-PacifiCon, and so far, we're the only city bidding. That'll be in early September; the traditional date of the s-f WorldCons. ## The employment situation got straightened out; I went directly from one job to another (Catalog Librarian at the University of Southern California). Good for the financial situation, but with no time for a vacation this year. Oh, well. ## Sure, most of the vocabulary in those Mexican comics is in my handy-dandy, 35¢, pocket Spanish-English dictionary, up to & including such common words as ametralladora (machine-gun). I'll try picking up a few Mexican issues for you; your request came at a particularly appropriate time, since I'm going down to Tijuana, just on the other side of the U.S.-Mexico border, with various fan friends next weekend on a Christmas shopping expedition. Bjo organizes such an expedition every year; she knows of all sorts of goodies that make great presents that you can't get in the States. In my case, I'm looking forward to getting several comics that the Mexican newsdealer in Los Angeles stopped stocking last year. ## Yes, double color on the mimeograph means running the paper through the machine twice. As I find color-changing a particularly messy & hateful job, I usually wait until I've got a large amount of illustrations stacked up, then get 'em all out of the way at once. ## DOWN UNDER and the Aussie comics arrived okay, and thanks a million. I'll write as soon as I can; I'm afraid my private correspondance habitually takes 2nd place to my fanac, which doesn't leave time for much else. ## No, I've never heard of Parade of Pleasure; I'll look for some information on it. ## Len Brown, prop. of the Collector's Book Store here in LA, just reported that a rival bookshop paid $2,000 for hundreds of old pre-1942 comic books, most of which he's never heard of and have never been mentioned in any of Jerry's articles or in Bill's GUIDEBOOK at all. He figures that they're worth 5 times the $2,000; his tongue was hanging out. ## THE EVERGREEN REVIEW is an avant-garde lit'ry magazine ($1 an issue, I believe) which has just taken to reprinting the French comic feature, "Barbarella".

Rick Weingroff — Oh, "losing" Seduction of the Innocent would never do! You know what would happen then? The libraries would all order replacement copies; the publisher, getting all those replacement orders at once, would think, "Gee, this must be more popular than we'd realized", and rush a new edition into print. Such new interest might even prompt a paperback reprint! The nation would be flooded with copies of Seduction of the Innocent, and all because of your ill-advised proposal.

SMALL TALK

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Small Talk #7, for mailing with CAPA-ALPHA #14, November 15, 1965
Editor: Glen Johnson, Box 338, Crownpoint, New Mexico (87313)

* *

While on vacation, I managed to pick up two unusual items. The first being "The American Air Forces #1. This is believed the first title published by ME, tho' the indicia credits it as being published by Th. Flying Cadet Publishing Co. The editor is Ray Krank and Vincent Sullivan is Publishe while Craig Flessel is art editor. It is interesting to note that during this same period, Vincent Sullivan was also editor of the Columbia Publishing Group, while Ray Krank was a writer for the same outfit. Artists in this issue are: Chas. M. Quinlan (Catman artist), and Craig Flessel. The stories have to do with the Army, Air Force and Navy. Also it contains many photos of the services. Tho' it wasn't much, it did eventually lead to a very successful comic company. If anyone has any issues besides #1 of the above title, I wish they would contact me.

The above item I knew existed, the following I had no idea was to be found. It is a big little book, titled "The Buccaneers", and the outstanding feature is that Russ Manning did the illustrations. The book is published by Whitman, and is copyrighted 1958. It is one of a series of TV Big Little Books, and chances are that Russ Manning did others.

DIAL H FOR HERO

The cover of HOUSE of MYSTERY #158 proclaims "The most original character in comic history!", which is really some statement, and is made quite frequently with little meaning. In this case, the statement does have a ring of truth to it. Robby Reed, the boy capable of changing into 1,000 different heroes is different and it is 'original', but I wonder how long it will be around. In my opinion, it is the best of Editor Jack Schiff's creations, but I fear that the readers won't identify itself with 1,000 heroes, and that fandom won't go for the idea of such a large assortment of powers. I think that if the number were reduced greatly, and that if perhaps characters from the 1940's were used, this feature would have a great chance of becoming a hit. There are a number of characters from the 40's Robby Reed could become. For a start, there are, the GUARDIAN from Star Spangled, the Vigilante from Action, Sandman from Adventure, Crimson Avenger and Air Wave from Detective, the members of the "Seven Soldiers of Victory", etc., as well as any new heroes such as used in the first issue. At any rate, I'm sure all fans reading this will agree that "Dial H for Here" is a much better script than "ULTRA"!

THUNDERBOLT, a new hero.

I couldn't help but mention something about Charlton's newest entry in the field, and he's a dandy. Not only is the art above average, but the story is well written, and this is something for Charlton. Usually there are a number of loose ends, but in this case, the artist and creator seems to have done a much better job of writing than the authors working for Charlton. I'm interested in knowing what old titles of A.C.G. Lev Gleason and Atlas this artist has art in. I'd appreciate any information anyone might have.

Comments on the ALLEYS

In issue number 10 of C-A, Don Thompson mentioned Alley Awards, and his views of distribution of the ballots, etc. I had written my views on this as a reply, but somehow they were lost before I could type a master, and now, months later, I'm re-doing what I think must be said. In many ways, Don is correct when he says that any and all fanzines should carry the ballots for the Alleys, but I think in doing this, he is forgetting one important thing, and this is that TCR was designed for quick delivery, and a fanzine which is on a monthly schedule

will hold up the Alleys more than they already will be. My main complaint is that it has taken too long for the Alley results to appear as is. Usually the results appears in the March issue of TCR, and if I'm not mistaken, the December issues of all comic titles are on the stands before the first week in November, or so they were this year, as I made a special note of watching the appearance of all titles in this area.

Being on the Executive Board, I knew that I was expected to nominate the various divisions and therefore I had made a list of titles I nominated. This was of little use as the date is now November 14th, and it seems we have no Executive Secretary to carry out the election, but if we had, and other board members were on the ball, the ballots should have been in the hands of each executive board member before November 1st, and returned by the 15th, which would allow the general ballot to appear in the December issue of TCR. Now comes the part where I disagree with Don. Since TCR is mailed first class, and if the ballots were in the December issue, the results could quickly be tabulated and appear in the following issue of TCR only if ballots from TCR were used due to the fact first class mail takes only a short time to be delivered. If ballots from all fanzines were waited for, it might take two or three extra months. I've always felt that too much time was allowed between the nomination of divisions and the printing of the results. It seems that if fans are really interested in voting in the Alleys, it should move along faster so that the results would appear sooner.

As for having a larger number of fans voting, this would indeed be welcomed, but I don't think this should be accomplished at the price of holding up the results so that other fanzines could carry ballots. I can't recall when or where, but didn't Jerry write something about being able to tell the winners of the first Alleys by tabulating the votes sent him for tabulations? If this be the case, why bother to hold up the results for other fanzines to carry the ballots when they don't come out on a regular schedule, and when they are not mailed first class? Of course, a few fanzines do come out on a regular schedule such as VOC, Yancy Street Journal, and R.B., and if they worked closely with the Executive Secretary and arranged for their publications to be released as soon as the ballots were sent to them by the Executive Secretary they probably could reach the voters before a set deadline.

I would suggest the following as a calendar for the Alley Awards, and any fanzine able to make the schedule eligible to carry the ballots. Of course, this would be for next year, and years following.

1. October 15, mailing of ballot to Executive Board.

2. November 1st, all comic titles out.

3. November 15th, return of all nomination ballots.

4. December issue of TCR, carry the ballots.

5. January issue of TCR, carry Alley Awards.

END

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FOR TRADE ONLY

T A R Z A N C O M I C S

Numbers #2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14 & 16

* *

We need another name for comic books. The blasted things aren't really comic anymore, nothing only 32 pages long should be called a book, and it gets pretty tiring hearing "HAW HAW! You read COMIC BOOKS? Yuk, yuk, yuk!" (Sound of guffaws receding down the street as we just stand there.)

With all due respect for the learned and erudite fans who have proposed so many names for our hobby, there is one which has been totally overlooked. It describes the objects well and is instantly recognizable by fan and man in the street alike: THOSE THINGS. "You mean you read THOSE THINGS?" Bet you've heard that often enough to satisfy you....

There's but one thing wrong with 'those things"--it just isn't that much of a social improvement over "comic books'. Ideas, anyone? (Well, Dave, it isn't that much worse than "junk", which also means "dope". We wouldn't want connotations like that, would we?)

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And there, ladies and gentlemen, you have the difference between 12 lines credit and 6 lines credit--Dave Kaler was mentioned at the end rather than the beginning. So where's the real difference between a mailing comment and something inspired by a mailing? In the layout? Reminds one of a certain philosophy favored by doogooders and scoundrels that says you can do anything as long as you remain pure at heart. The snapper there: how the devil do you know whether I am pure of heart? By my halo and layout?

Jerry Bails: Count this as a vote for full credit for mailing comments. What kind of a letter-substitute is K-a anyway, when we're forbidden to answer the letters under pain of losing half a page per page? I don't know about the rest of you people, but I like to know what you-all think of the things I do. It's nice to be praised--and if it's brickbats or indifference instead, it's at least a needed warning that my stuff isn't praiseworthy. Zot knows, it might make more sense to require comment on each and every contrib, even if just a word or two. This is known as feedback, and is what makes expensive hi-fi systems sound sweet.

Roy Thomas Prunella Prufrock may yet return. Now that Mrs. Trulock has quit (and with the revelation that she was not a firebreathing latter-day Carrie Nation or Anthony Comstock) it would appear that Pruney is not true to life. So you've ever seen a bear wearing a forester's outfit? The symbol need have nothing to do with the fact.

Has it occurred to you that Millie has been mentioned in Spiderman and The Fantastic Four so often that she really deserves a guest appearence...?

Roy and Everybody: If you want to use anything from PANGOLIN you are welcome to, but please ask first so I'll be able to avoid duplications (dreamer!) and know where I'm due to pop up next. We have all shown by example that we're not afraid to be seen together in one fanzine.

Oh Joy—the radio just mentioned that Prof. Arnold Rose won his lawsuit against Gerda Koch. Why the happiness? This Koch woman happens to be head of Christian Research, Inc.—one of those groups so noxious that it needs God on the masthead to scare away real people. She accused Prof. Rose of being a Communist (as well as about everybody else she could think of; you know the type, they believe the John Birch Society is a Commie front). Seems Prof. Rose wrote a book about communism in which he treated it logically....

Well, somebody has finally fought back, and won. Hopefully, the Right-thinking citizens of the ~~USA~~ USA (disheartened by this proof that even the courts are dominated by Communists) will now slink beneath their rocks and cower, stroking their bazookas and antitank guns and waiting for the Revolution.

It may not mean much to you. It does to me. I am one of those students (see, already a radical, no telling what next) and just may some day become a professor. Knowing I can stomp any S.O.B. who calls me a Commie because I wear a red shirt will sure feel good. I'm willing to hold still for being called atheist, libertine, or anything else reasonable and/or truthful. Being called the modern equivalent of "Vampire, werewolf!"—which is what Communist means here and now—is more than any person should be subjected to without being found in the process of changing into a bat, beast, or bearded Bolshevik.

Of course you realize that saying this makes me a Communist, and since you're in the same issue, it makes you Communists. Rotsa ruck.

DIRTY MIND DEPARTMENT

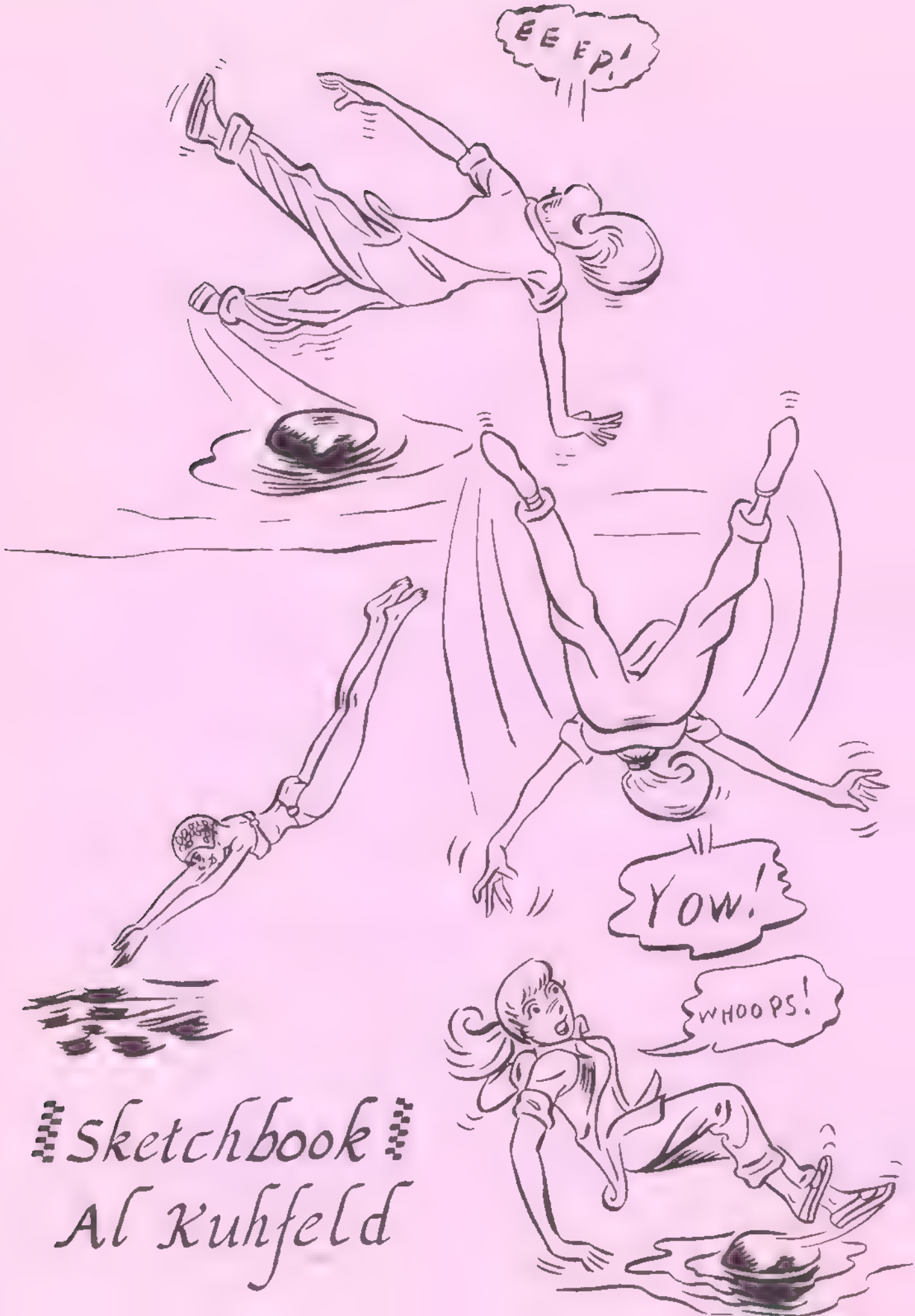
Did you notice in Superman 180 where Our Hero said to himself, 'She was lying! My x-ray vision detected no armored vest!"? Yes, Supie old chap, and just what was she wearing instead of an armored vest?

SuperPerson made the scene a bit late....

BOOKS I HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH RECENTLY DEPARTMENT

And what could be a better start than the SPEEDBALL LETTERING BOOK? Costing but one dollar as do its competitors, it thrice outdoes them in quality. The bright-eyed and eager young letterer can gorge to surfeit upon the myriad useful and interesting alphabets within. Color plates of illuminated manuscripts too; calligraphic initials and instruction for the novice. I suspect the only reason this book sells so cheaply is that all specifications for pens demand Speedball; well, they are the dominant pen on the market and you'd be getting them anyway, so don't sweat it. If you're tired of looking like you learned to letter from comic books—buy! There's only one thing wrong with my copy—it's gathering inkblots on the pages devoted to Chancery Cursive. And that's hardly its fault.

There is one new comic that I simply must mention. It is rather lonesome being a teenager-comics fan in the midst of hero-lovers, and so I shall convert you for my mental comfort. Fortunately, the best teenager comic I have ever seen is now on the stands—at least, it is if your stands have a long memory; this won't reach you for a month. Its title is HENRY, and don't you be fooled one bit by the cover, which is designed to imitate a low form of Archie (the company that owns the teenage comic market). Inside is some of the wildest, and best, stuff Bob Powell has ever produced. Remember the way-out humor in Man in Black? Well here it is again. The art hasn't quite settled down yet, but it is truly wild and wonderful. I kid you not, people: if you've ever contemplated buying in this category this is the place to start, even at 25¢ for 48 pages (40 pp. of story). I have a buck's worth of them, including one to slice up, paste into a notebook, and study.



Sketchbook

Al Kuhfeld

What's that you say? You're not interested in the previous page? Well, you don't have to be; this issue I only need three pages of interest to the membership. And secondly, you are interested, or will be when you find out that I got a hundred copies of that for precisely $2.40. A new business--INSTANT PRINTING by name--has moved into Minneapolis. You can walk in, hand the man your line drawing (it takes typing too; line means "not-halftone"), and half an hour later walk out with as many copies as your heart desires. A thousand copies cost $8.25.

I once saw such a place in Chicago, and they should be spreading like wildfire--the man said sales were fantastic, with a new press expected before the week was out to help handle the load. It's things like this that make photo-offset fun--why not check your phone directory?

And not only that, but the bus runs right past their offices, making it feasible to reach them during all but the foulest of weather.

+

What-ho, I see that I've not identified myself. The name is, as you may have surmised, Al Kuhfeld. 'tis best, however, to take a legalistic attitude towards this kind of thing.

*

The winter is closing in here in Minnesota, and it is time to meditate upon the minor joys of being a superhero. Everybody knows bullets bounce from Superman--but mosquitoes? Imagine a life entirely free from the stings and stabs of maneating insects and other carnivorae! Being perfectly comfortable on the blazing surface of the sun means no sweat for Minnesota summers (which are pretty damn hot) and a refreshing glass of liquid helium now and then conditions one for Minnesota winters. Gad, would I like to be able to go without food for months at a time! Imagine the money saved--not to mention never having to wash dishes.

How long would it take to clean house at superspeed, or read the evening paper, answer all those damn letters that keep piling up, or even put out a contrib to K-a? On a more mundane level, wouldn't it be easy seducing fair maidens with half the female population of the world panting eagerly for your embrace? (Jan and Maggie, read "male".)

Who cares about battling crime and injustice, or even gathering clouds of glory? I hate mosquitoes, getting hungry, and the risk of being scragged by taxicab drivers.

+

Pity the poor devils in New York with their recent power failure. Perhaps somebody should write them a letter:

Dear Sirs:

I am the cause of your recent power failure. Deposit one million dollars in small bills at the top of the Empire State Building during the next thunderstorm, or I shall strike again!

Sincerely yours,
Electro

BIT-O-GAB #3 by Tom Mc Geehan

Gold Key is really continuing their reprints! While some of them are from the 50's, they also are reprinting them from the 40's too. The only thing I really object to is the random numbering of them. Some continue the old numbers, while others start a new number. But at least they are reprinting them. Now to list some more of these reprints.

The Best of Donald Duck #1 (code dated Aug'65) reprints a 28 pg DD story from DD One Shot #223 (code dated Apr'49) entitled "DD in Lost in the Indies".

Mickey Mouse #103 (Aug'65) reprints a 20 pg MM story from MM One Shot #170 (code dated Nov'47) entitled "MM on Spook's Island", which was also in BIB form ("MM on the Haunted Island" new better Little book#708, 188 pgs, 1950).

Mickey Mouse #104 (Dec'65) reprints a 16 pg MM story from MM One Shot #343 (Aug'51) entitled "MM in the Ruby Eye of Homar-Guy-Am"; and an 8 pg MM story from MM One Shot #427 (Oct'52).

Christmas Parade #4 (code dated Oct'65) reprints a 20 pg DD story from DD One Shot #203 (code dated Dec'48) entitled "DD in the Golden Christmas Tree"; and a 12 pg 1948 MM story entitled "MM & Goofy in Special Delivery".

Zorro #1 (code dated Oct'65) reprints the first Walt Disney's Zorro comic book, One Shot #882 (code dated Feb'58), which include the 18 pg Zorro story entitled "Presenting Senor Zorro", the 14 pg Zorro story entitled "Zorro's Secret Pasage", and the 4 pgs for the covers.

Tarzan of the Apes #155 (Dec'65), while not a reprint, is one comic you don't want to miss! It has a brand new 24 pg Tarzan story based on the true origin of Tarzan by Edgar Rice Burroughs from the book "Tarzan of the Apes", drawn by none other than Russ Manning (with Mike Royer helping out on it as his assistant)!!! Next issue will feature ERB's "Return of Tarzan" drawn by Manning. If the public likes them, Gold Key plans to have comic book versions of all the ERB Tarzan books!

80 Page Giant #17 (Batman#176, a double number) Dec'65, 25¢, DC, reprints the Sunday Batman strip #130 (4/28/46) thru #137 (6/16/46), 8 full Sunday pages!!! At least DC is doing their bit for reprints.

Wonder Woman #158 (Nov'65) is worthy of mention as it a first. It has an 8-2/3 pg WW story that shows the DC Editors deciding to get rid of all the Wondergirl, Wondertot, etc. crap and have origenal-type WW stories, entitled "The End--Or the Beginning". All these new characters are retired, thanks to the persuading of all the fans. If this doesn't go over (sales-wise) they'll probably bring all the crap back.

Wonder Woman #159 (Jan'66), DC, tells the true origin of Wonder Woman in the 11-1/3 pg story entitled "The Golden Age Secret Origin of Wonder Woman".

80 Page Giant #18 (Superman #183) Jan'66, reprints three old Superman stories at last: 12 pg "The Mysterious Mr. Mxyzptlk" (the very first Mr. Mxyzptlk story) from Superman #30 (Sept-Oct'44); 13 pg "The Case of the Funny Paper Crimes"; and 12 pg "Superman, Cartoon Hero" story.

These are the reprints that I've seen so far that I think might be of interest to fans. Though I haven't boughten them, I've seen reprints of The Lone Ranger, Daffy Duck, Woody Woodpecker, Tweety & Sylvester, Little Lulu, Chip & Dale, Spyke & Tyke, etc. Most of their (GK's) reprints have written on the first panel of the story "Reprinted by popular demand". The reprints are usually, if not always, reprinted as is, except the coloring is usually off! Originally the coloring was naturally: blue skie, white clouds, ble sea, etc. But on the reprints the color varies greatly, including a red sky or red sea! Even the old covers are reprinted, along with a lot of one shot joke pages (of Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Bugs Bunny, etc.) to round out the issues.

As most of you know, Gold Key was planning to reprint the Alex Raymond Flash Gordon Sunday strips in comic book form, but changed their minds because (so I've heard, true?) old proofs or plates were not available of the strips to reprint them from. But I've heard that Kings Features has all but the first couple of years of them, so maybe they can reprint them after all. Also, we have just found out that over in Italy they have reprinted them (1964-65) in color from #1 on up, but in Italian (John has three of the comics so far). So if GK wanted to they could have them translated and reprint them. I know they did this over in England for Tarzan Adventures when they translated some Hal Foster Tarzan Sunday pages from Spanish to publish in their comic. Also, we've heard that they are going to publish the FG strips (#1 on up I imagine, and complete I hope, as the Italian ones are abridged or "cut") over in Europe in English!! So if Gold Key wants to they can look info getting copies of these European proofs or plates so they can reprint them (preferably in a 25¢ comic, 80 pgs, so they can publish them complete and uncut!).

I sure hope Gold Key will look into this, as these Alex Raymond Flash Gordon strips are masterpieces as everyone knows, and really deserve to be reprinted (uncut of course and with the correct coloring), especially with GK doing all the other reprints now. They should also look into reprinting the great Hal Foster Prince Valiant strips, from #1 on up in a 25¢ 80 pg comic book. The Italians are reprinting PV just like they have FG (only PV strips are complete!) so copies are available for reprinting. At least a sample issue of FG & PV should be put out by GK to test sales, if nothing else.

While I must admit it might be hard for Gold Key to reprint the old Phantom strips as it'd conflict with the Phantom's present story-line, GK could reprint the old Mandrake Sunday & daily strips. While the artwork might not be up to today's standards, the stories are pretty good (the ones that I've read) and well worth reprinting. Again GK could start from strip #1 on up in a 25¢ 80 pg comic. Another strip that merits reprinting is the Alex Raymond daily Rip Kirby strip! These strips are available as they are being reprinted over in Italy, along with FG, PF, etc. I sure hope GK will look into these, and see about possible trial issues.

As I said before, any worthwhile tape recorder info will be put in my "Sit-O-Gab" collumn, and I do have a few bits of info worthy of mention. I finally found out what was wrong with the Concord 884 (at least on 3 or 4 different "884's" in one area). The capstan on them (which is the metal wheel that presses against a rubber one between which the tape passes) was 1/1000th of an inch or so to big and had to be shaved down. If a tape was recorded and playedback on the same machine it was okay, but when you played a tape from another machine on the 884 you could tell the speed was off and the sound "distorted". This may have been just a fault on a few of them, or maybe a lot of 884's have the same fault, I don't know. A new recorder just out I was going to recommend for a good 3 head recorder for around $300. This is the AMPEX 800 series. It doesn't look like much or have many controls, but it's AMPEX!!! That means it will last a long time, take more abuse if necessary, and make good quality recordings. It has 2 meters, 3 speeds (1-7/8, 3-3/4, & 7½), and professional deep gap heads. You can buy one model with two detachable speakers that form the lid, two mikes, and the complete transistorized pre-amps & amps, for under $300. But after writing and getting the instruction book for it I find it only has 2 heads!!! So now I must state that it would be a good recorder for around $150, but I doubt if I'd buy it for $300.

We have it on pretty good authority that Marvel destroys all of their originals (for their comic book stories) after they use them. But they retain their plates which they use for reprinting the stories in their annuals. Unfortunately, I must announce that Jim Harmon's radio series RADIO RIDES AGAIN has went off the air after only 15 shows. The series of 15 half hour shows on KPFK-FM, on every other Sunday night from 7:00 to 7:30, ran from 2/7/65 thru 8/22/65. Jim Harmon is suppose to have on another series called THE JIM HARMON-KPFK POP ART REVIEW starting soon, tho. In fact, maybe it's already started and I missed it. I'm trying to find out now about it. We've also learned (for sure) that Alex Raymond wrote the Sunday Flash Gordon strip from #1 on up to around 4/21/41 where FG goes back to Earth in "The Red Sword Invaders". After that other various persons took over the writing of it, tho exactly who did what we don't know.

KA Additions #3 by Tom

First to list all the new monster/sf mags out that I know of up to date.

Famous Monsters of Filmland #35 Oct'65 (----) 50¢ 100 pgs
Famous Monsters of Filmland #36 Dec'65 (----) 50¢ 100 pgs
Mad Monsters #1? Winter'65 (----) 35¢ 68 pgs
Monsters Unlimited #5 Sept* '65 (----) 25¢ 36 pgs
Monster World #5 Oct'65 (----) 35¢ 68 pgs
Monster World #6 Jan'66 (----) 35¢ 68 pgs
Creepy #5 Oct'65 (----) 35¢ 60 pgs
Creepy #6 Dec'65 (----) 35¢ 68 pgs
Castle of Frankenstein #7 Oct* '65 (V2#3) 35¢ 68 pgs
Shriek #2 Oct'65 (----) 50¢ 68 pgs
Blazing Combat #1 Oct'65 (----) 35¢ 68 pgs, a Warren pub.
Blazing Combat #2 Jan'66 (----) 35¢ 68 pgs, a Warren pub.
Do-It-Yourself Monster Make-Up Handbook by Dick Smith #one shot Oct* '65 (----) 60¢ 100 pgs, a Warren publication.
The Official Munsters Magazine #1 Oct* '65 (V1#1) 50¢ 68 pgs published by Twin Hits, Inc., 354 Broadway, NY, NY.
Cracked's For Monsters Only #1 Nov'65 (V1#1) 35¢ 68 pgs published by Major Mags, Inc., 45 West 45th St., NY, NY 10036.
1966 Monster Calender #one shot Sept* '65 (----) $1.00 20 pgs published by Kable News Co., NY, NY, copyrighted by Prestige Publications, Playboy Bldg., L.A., Calif. 90069, has the following pictures for each month for 1966: Jan (Mr. Hyde); Feb (Frankenstein); Mar (The Mummy); Apr (a gorilla); May (the Wolfman); June(the Creature from the Black Lagoon); July (The Hunchback of Notre Dame); Aug (The Phantom of the Opera); Sept (The Mad Doctor) Oct (Dracula); Nov (Mole People); and Dec (a Mutant).
Weird #10? Jan'66 (V1#10) 35¢ 52 pgs published by Eerie Publications Inc., 315 West 70th St., NY, NY 10023. Was there a #1 to 10 and what were they? I never saw one myself before this issue.
Monsters, Maidens & Mayhem, A Pictorial History of Hollywood Film Monsters by Brad Steiger, Merit Paperback #6m490 (published by Camerarts Publishing Co., Inc., 2715 N. Pulaski Road, Chicago, Illinois 60639) Aug* '65, 60¢, 132 pgs, 4½" x 7".

Brave & The Bold: Guess what? My original info on B&B #8 in KA#7 is correct after all. For although Silent Knight, Robin Hood, and Golden Gladiator are advertised on the cover of B&B #8, GG is not in there. He is replaced by Viking Prince. So B&B #8 has in for sure SK, RH, and VP. This info comes from Frederich Norwood, who has the comic book! Thanks!

John Ryan: Both John and I would very mike like to see Gary Mason's Aussie Walt Disney info in KA. If the majority agree, put it in as soon as possible, okay?

The following is from Part 5, page 1&7 of the Los Angeles Times for September 22, 1965.

SPECTATOR, 1965

Batman, Sworn Enemy of Crime, Called to TV Battle

By ART SEIDENBAUM

Times Staff Writer

In the memorable words of Gotham City Police Commissioner Gordon: "I don't know who he is behind that mask of his. . . but I do know when we need him. And we need him now!"

Batman, of course.

Sworn enemy of crime, all dressed up in tights and cape as if he just leapt out of Harper's Bazzar. Archtype comic book hero because he could perform incredible feats yet remain vulnerable, mortal, non-Superman. A pop art character from the POW balloon above his head to the Courreges cut of his boots.

Batman has been around for a quarter-century, busting jaws to amuse kids and biding his time on the newsstands until the entire culture was ready for armed camp.

Television, which learns from pastiche experience even better than Commissioner Gordon, feels the time is almost now. This is the year of Fleming youth, with films playing cops and robbers; the epoch of social making when you can't tell disguise from dose girls; the peroid when it is finally considered mature to have a comic book mentality.

So Batman and his adolscent assistant, Robin (also under wraps), are in the works for prime time. This is significant, naturally. Maybe the trend will switch; after years of turning characters into animated cartoon strips, TV may be turning cartoon characters into flesh and blood.

Now you needn't hold your breath. Batman is not among the three dozen new shows thrashing onto the channels this month. One of the fiendish realities of television is the delay between shooting abd public impact.

Getting Ready for '66

Even as the networks and studios and sponsors are puffing this year's new starters (an overjolt of spies and eyes and western skies), there are hundreds of grown men getting ready for the fall of 1966.

William Sozier, the mastermind behind Batman, is one of them. Having worn more titles than a silent movie (from West Coast chief of CBS to TV boss at Screen Gems), Dozier these days is head of Greenway Productions, quartering at 20th Century Fox.

Greenway will worry the immediate acceptance of The Loner, a Rod Sterling-written exercise for Lloyd Bridges. At the same time, it is grappling with four other pilots for next year: Journey Into Fear, an Eric Ambler revival of espionage; a Tammy Grimes comedy series constructed by George Axelrod; They Went Thataway, son Bob Dozier's try at playing posse, (cont.)

(cont.) and Batman by Lorenzo Semple Jr.

Some Will Die

Between now and December, all four of these shows will have been shot in pilot form. In January, when many of this year's series will have died of down-ratings, the networks and the sponsors will decide what to show an innocent public for next season. By June of 1966, the accepted shows will shooting their first dozen episodes.

"Batman" is already a $400,000 expense to ABC and Fox. Before it first lights the family room,more than one-half million dollars will have gone up the tube. There are no cheap capers in this grim business.

Only one out of three pilors now in the shooting stage will take the air as a series. Dozier, sitting on a sofa with a poodle named Mac (he shares the office), figures to be ahead of the game if half of his four new pilots get turned on. Even then, the odds for profit are only so-so. A show has to be in its second year of situations before everybody gets well.

A Jazzy Batman

Meanwhile, about Batman. Dozier is investing in music by Neil Hefti, an expert who knows the jazz score. He's having George Barris, the custom coachman, build a $15,000 Batmobile that will out-button the British Bondmobile. He's ordering a set of pop art titles right out of Lichtenstein. He's looking for the right Robin, which is a real chore.

The young man must be able to pass for 15 but be at least 18 years old (to avoid keeping school on the set). And, since you have to hope for three years of running, the boy must be about finished with his growing.

Purest Hero of All

Most important, the cardboard Batman character, "the purest hero of them all," has to be played and written on two planes. One, to satisfy the kids' demand for a square-jawed straight shooter. Two, to let the adults in on a joke. "We'll lay on top of it a hip technique," says Dozier, admitting that the comic books he's read as research have been horrible.

Oddly, Batman and Captain Marvel and other leotarded heroes are already enjoying a rebirth within eccentric camping circles. Critic Burt Prelutsky, a man who can kill with a polysyllable, has already boggled over the "foul innuendos about Batman and Robin."

Greenway will surely right such inverted imppressions. Any Batman on ABC will be wholesome as cereal, as pure as soap, as clean as teeth brushed with the right sort of paste. That's what nice television is made of.

The following is in the Santa Ana Register for 11/7/65 on B-18: ABC will add a series called "Batman" to its schedule on Jan. 12. Adam West stars as the character who hunts down criminals as made famous in the "Batman" comic books. It will be seen twice a week - Wednesdays and Thursday at 7:30 - 8 p.m.

By John Mc Geehan

The Los Angeles Times for 10/20/65 has the following on E-18:

ABC has given the ax to the twice-weekly Shindig program and will bring in a new series, Batman, as the replacement. Batman, based on the comic books of the same name, will be seen Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet, now in the 7:30 p.m. Wednesday slot, will move to 7:30 p.m. Saturday. Batman stars Adam West as a crime-buster, with Burt Ward as his sidekick. William Dozier is the producer. The changes will go into effect in January.

Santa Ana Register for 10/29/65 has the following on B-4.

Producer of 'Batman'. Howie Horwitz, formerly producer of "77 Sunset Strip" and "Hawaiian Eye" at Warners TV, and more recently with Screen Gems and CBS-TV, has joined William Dozier's Greenway Productions as producer of the "Batman" series at 20th Century-Fox Television.

Pilot production on "Batman" is now in progress, with series production to follow immediately for airing on ABC-TV. Dozier is personally producing the pilot, but will function as executive producer of the series. Writters and directors for the series are now being signed.

Los Angeles Herald-Examiner for 9/23/65 has the following on A-22 in Bob Hull's 'TV Talk' column: Batman, the comic book hero, is another idea straight off the middle burner of TV's griddle. They won't take a thing away from him. Robin, the Batboy, or something, will be in the series too. In place of animals, there'll be the Batmobile, a car with all the super weapons you see today in one of the James Bond pictures.

Los Angeles Herald-Examiner for 10/21/65 has the following on F-6 in Bob Hull's 'TV TALK' column: Comic Book Heroes Next Trend in Video Programs?

On Jan. 12, the American Broadcasting Co. will debut a twice-weekly, half-hour television series titled Batman, based on the old comic book hero. It is being made to appeal to "hippies."

The "hip" type today, according to ABC's vice president in charge of programming, Edgar J. Scherick, "is the sophisticated young adult who likes pop art, goes to discotheques and buys Tiffany lamps."

Strangely, Batman will replace a dying discotheque show, Shindig, when it bows in as a Wednesday-Thursday early evening treat.

The series, starring Adam West in the title role, with Burt Ward as his young aide, Robin, "has all the elements of a rousing show," says Scherick, brimming with enthusiasm. "There's action, adventure, deeds of daring, incredibly evil villains, an incredibly brave and resourceful hero, futuristic scientific aids to thwarting crime. . . It's played with tongue firmly in cheek and is so far out, it's in. Sophisticated young adults, Mr. Scherick should know, have another word describing what is in. "Camp" means anything so very bad that it is good. Batman should be camp.

Appearently the publishers don't think that reprints of old action & adventure comic strips would sell in this country, since they refuse to put them out; and tho this is probably true, they'll never completely convince me of it until they have tried it a few times in the 1960s.

Western said that Alex Raymond's artwork on Flash Gordon is to detailed to reproduce from the comic pages themselves & since they had no pre'40 proofs they couldn't use any AR work in any FG comic. Well, I have talked to persons who have a pretty thourgh knowledge of the field of lithography & printing and they said that Sunday strips could be used; but that it envolves a time consuming & expensive process. I don't recall the details, but basicly it's a matter of erasing all the color from the strips and then going on from there just as one would with a black & white proof. The hitch is this 'erasing the color' since it takes a lot of hours to do a strip.

I realize that the dozen years of AR's work on FG wouldn't fill many issues; but that is all we really want;--a clear, original colored reproduction of all those strips with either the use of one tabloid strip per page or the complete strip with a varied number of panels per page and not edited, redrawn or louzy colored ones. We don't need a long running series of Flash Gordon comics; just enough to contain all the AR strips. The publishers could put out a couple issues under their trial issue or one-shot numbering system and if sales merited it, continue publishing them the same way until all Alex Raymond strips have been used up.

Tho Flash Gordon is the main one, there are many other old strips that could be tried out. Unfortunately, it appears that no kind of Prince Valiant comic would sell nowdays and one can't expect Western to reprint old Phantom strip tales where Diana and her folks knew very little about the Phantom, in their Phantom comic; but Mandrake, Buck Rogers and possibly Brick Bradford would make excellent test cases & tho it's mostly wishful thinking, I hope someone will make use of the 'wealth' of strips from the '30s and '40s someday.

All is not darkness for the strip addit however. The Italians have & are reprinting old strips & it is rumored that King Features plans to have '37 & up FG & possibly others in English sold in Europe. None will be available in the Americas, but as long as an English language edition is published somewhere in the world, a few of us will be able to acquire copies through contacts and others can get them through dealers.

As to what is available from Italy, here is a rundown on the material that I have on hand at present.

The first title is FLash Gordon and it's 8-3/4" x 10-1/2", comes out every two weeks, sells for 150 lire (25¢) and contains 64 pages of colored strip reprints per issue with three or four panels per page, the number depending upon the size of the panels.

The first issue is dated August 10, 1964 and reprints most of the very first Flash Gordon strip story, which is also the first FG big-little-book entitled "FG on the Planet Mongo". (cont.)

(continued) The 12th issue is dated January 2, 1965 and contains the last half of "FG & the Power Men of Mongo" and the first half of "FG & the Red Sword Invaders", which are '40 & '41 strips

The 15th issue is dated Febuary 13, 1965 and contains the last half of "FG & the Fiery Desert of Mongo" and the first half of the next story which wasn't in any blb, which are '43 and possibly some '44 strips.

The second title is Prince Valiant which also is 8-3/4" x 10-1/2", comes out bi-weekly, sells for 150 lire (25¢), but contains only 48 pages of colored strip reprints and illustrated text per issue.

The third issue contains reprints of 32 PV strips at one strip per page---5/7/38 (#65) thru 12/11/38 (#96)--and 16 pgs of text 'sprinkled' with reprints of panels which might have been reprinted from an Italian edition of the American hardcover Prince Valiant books.

The first issue no doubt reprints the first 32 strips and the second issue contains the next 32 strips; with 16 pages of text each.

These comics also contain a letter column on the inside back cover and from the dates & strips mentioned therein one can easily see that long time afficiandoes of the strips have written in and given a lot of valueable info & comments on them. I'm only sorry that I can't read Italian as they sure 'look' interesting.

Another title is SUPER ALBO, which appearently is a weekly comic containing Mandrake & Tim Tyler's Luck one issue and The Phantom & possibly something else the next. They are 7" x 9-1/2",sell for 120 lire (20¢) and contain 64 pages of possibly complete (minus the title frame) colored comic strip reprints.

#152 is dated August 29, 1965 and reprints 32 pages of daily Mandrake strips in color, covering October 1, 1934 thru November 24, 1934; and 32 pages of Sunday Tim Tyler's Luck strips in color, covering from Febuary 8, 1953 thru May 17, 1953.

#154 is dated September 12, 1965 and reprints 52 pages of daily Mandrake strips covering November 26, 1934 thru Febuary 23, 1935; and 12 pages of Sunday Tim Tyler's Luck strips covering January 16, 1955 thru Febuary 20, 1955.

A fourth title contains Mandrake & Brick Bradford, the latter character is called Batstar in Italian comics. It is 6" x 8-1/2", sells for 100 lire (16-2/3¢), comes out every two weeks and contains 64 pages of possiblycomplete strip reprints (minus the title frame on the Sundays).

#84 is dated March 21, 1965 and contains 40 pages of daily Mandrake strips covering June 15, 1964 thru August 22, 1964 (one can't expect two titles with OLD strips); and 22 pages of Brick Bradford daily strips covering the first week in Febuary of 19?? (unfortunately the year date data was all erased & the words "copyright opera mundi" printed in its place instead throughout the tale. Tho unfortunate, at least they left in the day & month dates, which is something the American publishers never did on color strip reprints) thru March 20th of 19??.(cont)

(continued) #87 is dated May 2, 1965 and contains 32 pages of Sunday Mandrake strips covering August 16, 1964 thru November 29, 1964 and 32 pages of daily Brick Bradford strips from July 10, 19?? thru September 4, 19??.

#88 is dated May 16, 1965 and contains 32 pages of Sunday Mandrake strips covering December 6, 1964 thru March 14, 1964 and 32 pages of daily Brick Bradford strips covering September 6, 19?? thru October 30, 19??.

Those are all the Italian comics I have on hand and hense that's all the info I can give on them at present; but as I get more issues and titles and make use of an Italian dictionary I'll give more details on these Italian 'strippers' delights, including ones containing Secret Agent X-9, Rip Kirby and Jungle Jim strip reprints.

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Not every stripper can get their monies worth by subscribing to the EDITOR & PUBLISHER, but everyone should get their annual Syndicate Directory. This seventysome page magazine can be had for only 50¢ per copy and one can get the current issue (labeled as Section Two of the July 31, 1965 issue of the EDITOR & PUBLISHER) from: Editor and Publisher - 830 Third Avenue - New York 22 - New York. The main features of the issue are as follows: 1) an alphabetical directory of the syndicates & features. 2) classifications of syndicated features. 3) alphabetical listing of the titles of by line of features. and 4) alphabetical directory of syndicated features listed by authors. The ads throughout the issue are also of interest as the 1963 directory lets us know that Blondie is carried in 1541 papers; the 1964 one tells us that Blondie is No. One by being in 1575 papers and the 1965 issue informs us that the strip is still king with it being carried in 1600 papers.

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Many newspaper & libraries have been microfilming their file set of newspapers and disposing of the latter once they are on film. Enterprising dealers have picked up complete runs of papers 'for a song' from said places and even fans have acquired a few. Unfortunately our library never stocked any back issues so there were none to be had by us. Many areas have been cleaned out, but if you're able & up to it, it could be very worthwhile for you to check around and see if anything is available and what it would set you back to get it. A prime item is sufficient storage space & another is time to sort & cut out the strips, but the monetary collector's item reward is great for those who can acquire and keep/trade/sell runs of old Sunday/daily Flash Gordon, Tarzan, Prince Valiant and other great strips.

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Although it doesn't look it at times, every page of CAPA-ALPHA material I do is the result of a second draft and once in a great while even a third one. I also proof read the pages, but this doesn't do one any good when you can't spell the word correctly to begin with. I have found that no matter how many typos I catch & correct, I can still read the material over a month or two later and immeaditely spot obvious ones that I should have caught the first time. (continued)

(continued) No one wants even a misplaced comma in his writings, but unless one has at least two persons with an excellent command of spelling & grammer each proof read all of his material, at least one error is bound to showup & in my opinion the author can be satisfied as long as all mistakes are easily reconizeable for what they are and not have typos or incorrect info cause the readers to be misinformed.

I wonder how many collectors today really intend to continue to keep up & maintain their collections for the next ten, twenty, thirty or more years? I wonder how many collections will 'survive' such things as the owner going to college, being in the arm forces, getting married, leaving home & going out on their own, moving from place to place & the constant need for more storage space?

I wonder how many of them would do as D. Peter Odgen did with his Burroughs collection? When Pete moved from England to Canada, his collection went with him. It also went along when he moved from Canada to Florida & Pete paid to have it stored until he got all settled. I know that I have quite a bit of material on hand that I wouldn't move out of the state, much less "across the pond" (Alantic Ocean to neos).

I know that only a small percentage of current tean-age collectors will have a complete collection of whatever titles they collect, ten years from now; but I wonder how many of them now think that they will?

I don't expect comicdom will ever take a poll on the subject, but I think that if asked, the majority of the fans would say that if lack of storage space, the need for cash or anything else would ever force them to dispose of their collection, that they could do so quickly & easily for at least their original cost price and thus not be out anything money wise.

A person who only needed an item or two to complete a 'run' of something is usually willing to pay more then the current 'going price' and in the case of a rare item he could go thrice what it's worth & still be ahead since the added value of a complete collection would well be worth it. There is naturely only a minute quanity of 'wanted' material that falls into this catagory, but it appears that the majority of the sellers price every item as if they expected it to be needed(& they able to easy locate them) by someone to complete their collection. A lack of sales is the only thing that will ever convince some fen that just because one collector that they know of paid a lot more for an item then it's worth doesn't mean that everyone is anxiously waiting & willing to pay it. The law of supply & demand does not mean that you'll always get top dollar for your material; but rather that the amount you can get for an item depends on how bad the persons who have access to purchasing your material want it and how much they are willing & able to pay at that particular time. One must keep in mind that just because a dealer or search service can get 50¢ or a buck for a couple month's old 12¢ comic from some completest who missed that issue doesn't mean that you can do likewise by placing an ad in THE ROCKET'S BLAST. There are many collectors who are only just that & they get there wants only from established & well known places in that business (cont.)

(continued) and they wouldn't "waste" a minute of their time engaging in any form of fan activity if they had the oppunity to do so.

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The following is from page 22 & 23 of a Sunday supplement from a British newspaper of which the title & date is unknown to me:

Page 22 has an 8-1/2" x 11" color painting of the upper half of Superman by Barry Fantoni.

Page 23 has the following text article:

Childhood Heroes 5. Paul Mandel writes on Superman.

The origins of Superman are mysterious. He was born on the planet krypton and was the sole survivor of a cosmic explosion; he suddenly appeared on Earth, as an American citizen, during 1938, in ACTION COMICS. By 1940, he was a national hero. Students of fantasy figures connect the appeal of his perfecc goodnedd and unlimited power with fear of Hitler and the entry of the United States in World War 11.

Like so many of the things we Americans exported to you - cars, films, hamburgers - he was improbably big and improbably attractive, and you adopted him with delight. You swapped him for other imported or bootlegged American comics at a time when you had very little paper to print your own on and eventually you even put him on your television.

But I'm afraid the Superman you know here is a sad and diluted copy of the original great man who dominated our childhood in America before the war. And he DID dominate it, too. We had him in dozens of daily newspapers and in cubic miles of comic books. We had him in serial films: Next Week: Chapter Vii, Superman Foils the Diamond Gang. Most of all we had him on the radio, which sold us dry cereal by the crate and occupied all our afternoons after school until we were forced to turn it off for supper.

He was undeniably super, and the radio made that point specially well. "Faster than a speeding bullet!" (said the announcer). "More powerful than a mighty express train! Able to leap tall buildings with a single bound! Look in the sky!" (said a passerby). "It's a bird!" (said another). "It's a plane!" (still another). "It's Superman!" And there, high overhead, in your mind's eye - pectoral muscles bulging beneath his undervest, red undershorts worn for some reason over blue tights - flew the Man of Steel, ready to use his super-strength and X-ray vision to fight crime and corruption whereever he found them.

What made Superman's fight specially attractive was his dual nature. For when he wasn't bounding over tall buildings he was plain old unsuper Clark Kent, a reporter for the Daily Planet. Kent wore glasses (that gave a lot of us heart), conspicously failed to make time with a girl named Lois Lane and moped around cringing publicly in the face of danger, lest he give his secret second, super-self away.

Clark was a biggish chap and he bulged suspiciously under his clothes, but nobody did catch on. That meant we were ALL supermen in disguise, similarly concealing our ability to zip into the bedroom, pull off our reporter suits (continued)

(continued) (I use to worry about people picking Superman's pocket when he was flying off somewhere) and leap out of our windows just in time to divert the drainage canal before the dam broke. In the original great, vintage Superman time all his acts were like that: eleemosynary plunges into burning cities to save families; nice one-handed catches of inter-city buses falling off cliffs; wholesale harvesting of bandits as they burrowed under banks. He taught us the dual advantages of strength and humility, and that you didn't go around breaking people or things unless you had a worthy purpose.

The war made the first heavy inroad in this attractive image. For Superman failed to turn his talents to its substantial challenges. (The trouble, I suppose, was that the unbelievable prospec-

ne. or motion

tained.

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Additions to Comic Zines Anyone? #3

ACTION HERO (#6-Sept 2'65) 36(1) pgs is published by Sherman & Wayne Howard. dit, 30+10, 3.

ALTER EGO (#9-Aug 14'65) 7" x 10", 48 pgs is published by Roy Thomas - c/O Dave Kaler, Box 392, Cooper Station, New York, N. Y., 10003. lit, 75+0, 5.

AMATEUR KOMIX (#2-Aug 16'65) 38(1) pgs is published by Gary Acord. (as), dit, 35+10, 2.

BATMANIA (#7-Oct 1'65) 28(1) pgs is published by Billy Joe White. did/mim, 30+10, 5.

1964 COMICCON BOOKLET,THE (one-shot-dated Aug'64; recieved Aug 27'65, the same time others did) 36 (2) pgs is published by Bernie Bubnis Jr. dit, 40+0, 4. I don't know how great the demand was for the stated 150copies of it printed; but I do know that we recieve one copy of it for the buck we sent him back in '64. We wanted a copy each or two copies altold, but I guess we can consider ourselves fortunate that Mr. Bubnis sent us one copy;--in fact, all the recievers are lucky that Bernie published & sent them anything at all since he gafiated or quit fandom & then came back to redeme himself somewhat with those who purchased his publication.

COMIC FAN,THE (#2-Oct 8'65) 36(1) pgs is published by Larry Herndon. dit, 30+10, 3. This is the final issue of the zine and no more will be published by Herndon or anyone else.

COMIC FEATURE (#3-Aug 14'65) 34(2) pgs is published by Larry Walczak. dit, 40+10, 3.

COMIC FORUM,THE (#1-Oct 19'65) 12(1) pgs is published by Louis Rollins, 3125 Big Dalton Avenue, Baldwin Park, California, 91706. typed carbon, 25+10, 1. The only worthwhile material in the issue was four pages of answers on three questions by some top fans and it's to bad they weren't printed in some quality publication.

COMIC READER,THE (#40- Aug 18'65, 20 pgs; #41- Sep 13'65, 22 pgs; #42-Oct 26'65, 18 pgs; #43-Nov 16'65, 14 pgs). The first two issues were published by Glen Johnson and had the same price, repro method & grading as his previous issues. Derrill Rothermich, c/o Jim King, Box 801 Rolla, Missouri, 65401, took over as publisher with #42 and for only an extra nickle he is giving the buyers offset which among its numerous avantages enables him to use smaller type and peduce 24 pgs of material down to 18. Derrill tells me that to hopes to make TCR the equal of A-E and he has numerous things planed that he hopes to have in use by the 45th or 46th issue that will go a long way towards accomplishing this & he might even have done the job by that time. lit, 30+0 for first class mailing. For flat mailing in a large envelope send same & a 5¢ stamp or just an extra dime,plus the regular 30¢ of course. Academy members get a 5¢ discount on TCR. (continued)

COMIC VENDER (#1-Nov 16'65) 34(2) pgs is published by Alan Jardo, 40 Steveson Lane, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. mim, 45+10, 2. This publication is advertised as an adzine with articles & artwork included as added attractions. As with most first issue of adzines this one was little more then a means for the publisher to sell his & a few friend's For Sale listing. The cover is an excellent one with a colored illustration of the Spectre & the inside front cover containing a miniature reproduction of the covers of ALL STAR COMICS #1 & three old Street & Smith pulps; but the rest of the issue contains mainly a poorly reproed copy of an article on pulps from the May 17'65 issue of 'The National Observer'; an unfunny gag strip on Captain America; fair gag illos on various comic characters and good to very fine reproduction on the ads. I expect that when Master Jardo ads up the number of orders he'll get for the second issue, he'll realize that an issue of a zine needs more than a cover to be a hit and that comicdon doesn't need any more high priced & low quality comic zines, much less ad ones.

CRYPT (#1-Sept 7'65) 34(3) pgs is published by Mike Maxim, 4831 East Superior Street, Duluth, Minnesota, 55804. dit, 25+10,3.

CYCLOPS (one-shot-July 27'65) 7" x 9-1/2", 28 pgs is published by Ed Lehmann, 2061 E. Legrande, Indianapolis, Indiana. lit, (as), 75+0, 5. A second issue MIGHT come out someday; but the publisher isn't sure and he askes that noone send for same until they see it advertised for sale.

ERBANIA (#17-Sept 14'65) 6" x 9", 16 pgs is published by D. Peter Ogden. (ERB), lit, 30+0 or 4 for $1.00, 5.

ERB-dom (#14-Nov 7'65) 20 pgs is published by Camile Cazedessus Jr. (ERB), lit, 40+0 or 5 for $2.00+0, 5. A near exact litho reprint of the originally mimeographed first issue is now available for 50+0. A litho reprint of the second issue will be available shortly for the same price. Get one for 50¢ or the two for a buck if you're a Burroughs fan and haven't yet done so.

FANTASY ILLUSTRATED (#4- Nov 5'65) 7" x 10", 44 pgs is published by Bill Spicer. (as), lit, 60+10, 5.

FANTASY FANDOM CROSSROADS (#2- Oct'65) 56(15) pgs is published by Charles Rogers Jr. (as), dit, 35+10, 3.

GOTHAM GAZETTE (#2- July 22'65, 6 pgs; #3-Sept 2'65, 6 pgs) is published by Steven Kelez. dit, 10+10, 4. The next (4th) issue will be the last do to lack of sufficient response & sales to merit continuing publication.

GUIDEBOOK TO COMICS FANDOM,THE (one-shot July 30'65) 5-1/2" x 8-1/2", 36 pgs is published by Bill Spicer. lit, 50+0, 5.

INCOGNITO (formerly SUPER HEROES ANNONYMOUS) (#3- Oct 30'65) 34 (15) pgs is published by Rick Jones, 881 Lovington Drive, Pittsburg, Penna, 15216. mim/dit, 25 0. 3. The publishers ask that you do not order the next issue untill it's advertised.

JEDDAK (#7-July 26'65) 46 pgs is published by Paul Moslander. dit, 45+0, 5.

K-ALPHA (#11-Aug 21'65, 72 pgs; #12-Sept 15'65, 54 pgs; #13-Oct 15'65, 38 pgs) is distributed by Jerry G. Bails. dit/mim/lit, membership, 5.

KOMIX HEROES OF THE FUTURE (#7- July 26'65) 40 (2) pgs (formerly published by Donald Schank) is published by Charles Rogers Jr., 6961 Riddick Street, Norfolk, Virginia. dit, 35+10,3.

KOMIK KOLLECTOR (#6-Aug 27'65) 22 pgs is published by Danny Cassidy. dit, 30+10, 3. The seventh issue will be lithographed, entitled FUTURA and(the printer willing) out by the middle of December. Master Cassidy plans to have a thousand copies printed up, keep five for himself, send purchasers their copy(ies) and give the remainder away as samples to newcomers & other potential customers. Giving away free samples is the best way for any worthwhile zine to increase circulation, so if Danny & his printer can get excellent layout, printing and collation/wrap-around-binding as well as well done artwork& articles----in short, a litho version of Ron Foss' COMIC COLLECTOR----he not only can match, but with a quarterly/bi-monthly (frequency depending on size) can surpass the current king of the comic ad zines, G. B. Love's TRB-CC, Just putting out an issue or two of even a top litho zine won't make much of an impression upon comicdom; but if Danny can put them out for a year without any signs of discontinuing publication he will have atained the title of 'Publisher of the Nation's Number One Comic Adzine' and will maintain same until he falters or someone else catches up.

MEN OF MYSTERY (#3-Sept'65) 42(3) pgs is published by Jeff Gelb. mim, 35+10, 3. The next(fourth) issue will cost 50+10.

ODD MAGAZINE (#11-Oct 28'65) 7" x 9-1/4", 40 pgs is published by Dave Herring. dit, 15+5, 5.

REVIEW (#1-Sept 1'65) 58(10) pgs is published by Douglas Moench, 3838 N. Claremont Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60618. dit, 50+10,3.

ROCKET'S BLAST-COMIC COLLECTOR,THE (#40-July 29'65, 68(4) pgs; #41-Oct 2'65, 86(1) pgs) is published by Gordon B. Love. mim, 4 for $1.25+40, 5.

SANCTUM (#2-Oct 30'65) 7" x 8-3/4", 72 pgs is published by Steve & Wayne Johnson, 1018 N. 31 Street, Corvallis, Oregon, 97330. dit, 40+10, 2.

SCHWARTZ INDEX,THE (Vol. 1-Aug 13'65) 36(5) pgs is published by James K. Weston, 4220 East-West Highway, University Park, Hyattsville, Maryland, 20782. mim, pre publication price was 75+0 and the present post publication price is $1.00+0. This incomplete index rates a '5' with those devotes of Julius Schwartz who want details on some of the comics he edited;a '4' with those who don't like incomplete listings; (continued)

(continued) a '3' with the preceeding who want a litho, wra-a-round job; a '2' with those who also think the tab was to high & a '1' to those who don't give a hoot about Julius Schwartz or the material he did.

SLAM-BANG (#4-July 26'65, 34(2) pgs #5-Sept 10'65, 22(2) pgs) is published by Richard Weingroff. multi, #4 cost 50+10 and #5 is 75+10, 5. Although #5 has only 20 pages of material selling for 75¢, it contains a thought prevoking, brain stimulating article full of original ideas about why Superman does certain things and in my opinion when compared with what's available in the field it is well worth the 'six-bits' asked for it.

STAR STUDDED COMICS (#7-Aug 30'65) 40 pgs is published by Larry Herndon. lit, 50+0, 5.

SUPER ADVENTURES (#3-Aug 14'65) 50(2) pgs is published by Dave Herring. dit, 25+5, 4.

TEXANS ONLY (#3-Aug 17'65, 12 pgs; #4-Oct 26'65, 38 pgs) is published by Kent Russell. dit, s.a.e. to residents of Texas & a few honorary Texans. Get it if you live in the Lone Star State; don't bother trying if you don't.

VALOR (#1-Aug 16'65) 34 pgs is published by Jim Gardner, 475 Patton Avenue, San Jose, California, 95128. dit, 35+10, 4.

VERY,VERY,VERY ODD(#1,Annual-Aug 18'65) 56 pgs is published by Dave Herring. dit, 30+5, 5.

VOICE OF COMICDOM (#5-Sept 18'65) 8 pgs is published by Marty Arbunich. lit, 25+0, 5. The issue is sent folded in three & sent in an envelope.

WEB SPINNER,THE (#2-Aug'65) 28 pgs is published by Mike Appel. dit, 20+10, 5.

YANCY STREET JOURNAL (#10-Sept 15'65) 4 pgs is published by Marty Arbunich. lit, 15 & sent folded in envelope, 5.

YMIR (#4-Aug 11'65) 22 + 2, 8-1/2" x 14" pgs is published by John Chambers. dit, 25+10, 3.

OTHER AMZINES CONTAINING COMIC MATERIAL

BATWING is published by Larry Dean Herndon, 1830 Highland Drive, Carrollton, Texas, 75006. The second issue was sent out in Oct of '65 and among its 34 dittoed pages is a four page index by me of the 'Tarzan' MARCH OF COMICS issues. The rest of the issue contains BATWING's usual excellent text fan fiction modeled on the old pulps of the '30s & '40s. Those who are only interested in comics will not care for the pub; but those who have a variety of interest or even one other interest in old text tales of Doc Savage, the Shadow, etc. will certainly go for BAWING. Articles on PLANET & other pulps will be in future isues. So all pulp fiction fen should send 35+10 for a copy of it.

(continued)
FIVE (formerly SO WHAT) is published by Fredrick Norwood, 111 Upperline, Franklin, Louisiana, 70538. The fifth mimeod issue of this SF&F slanted zine was recieved by me in Sept of '65 and among its 52(15) pgs is a 13 page 'Doctor Midnight' am strip written by Norwood and drawn by Steve Sabo. Copies are still available at 25¢ for any who want it.

SPECTRE (formerly FAMOUS FIENDS OF FILMDOM) is published by Mike Appel, 1103 Kinsella Avenue, Belleville, Illinois, 62221. The fifth dittoed issue of this 'monster' slanted zine was recieved by me on July 19'65 and among its 78 (2) pgs is a 2-3/4 page, part one, of an article by David Szurek entitled 'The Glory That Was EC's' that will be continued in the next (sixth) issue. dit, 50+0, '5' to monster fen; not worth it to strickly comic fen.

SHUDDER,THE is published by Mike Higgs, 138 Barrows Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham 11, Warwickhire, England. The second issue is dated Febuary'65 and among its 78 (3) pgs is a 22 page article on Dan Dare (A British comic strip character) by Charles Winstone. The article is illustrated and as a bonus with the issue a copy of the colored Dan Dare strip from the weekly BOY'S WORLD is included. THE SHUDDER is primarily a SF&S zine, but it is well worth the 25¢ tab to all but the strickly & highly discriminating or strickly American comic super hero fen. The price to folks in England is 25¢ or five issues for a buck. American fen can send a buck & get four issues sent to them or else wait until the issue is out or advertised as available from Mike's American agent& get it through him.

LATE ARRIVALS

YANCY STREET JOURNAL (#11-Nov 20'65) 4 pgs from Marty Arbunich. lit, 15 & sent folded in an envelope, 5.

STAR STUDDED COMICS (#4 reprint-Nov 18'65) from Larry Herndon. A wrap-a-round lithoed reprint of the fourth issue, 50+0, 5.

FLAME-ON (#2-Nov 20'65) 7" x 8-1/2", 64 pgs + 4, 8-1/2" x 11" lithoed pgs + 8 more 7" x 8-1/2" dittoed pgs is published by James Halperin. dit, 35+0, 3. Although the issue has poor reproduction & the pages aren't stappled together, I rated it a '3' since it contained lithoed covers, enough pages for the price, some color and some good, but short, articles. I'm of the opinion however that the pub is still not worth the time, effort & $$$ that Halperin puts into it and it is to bad that he can't find more worthwhile projects to devote his efforts too. Master Halperin has no intention of ceasing publication tho, so his readers will just have to hope that future issues are well put together & contain clear & easy to read reproduction. (cont.)

(continued)
H-B PRESENTS (#1-dated Nov'64, 20 pgs; #2-dated Dec'64, 20 pgs; #3-dated Dec'64-Jan'65, 24 pgs; #4-dated March'65, 24 pgs; #5-dated July'65, 40 pgs) is published by James Halperin, 11 White Pine Knoll, Wayland, Mass, 01778. (as), dit, 15+10, 1 to 3. I just ordered these recently & only recieved them today (11/20/65); but they have been out for sometime and it's only through reprints that copies of all five issues are still available. The first four issues amount to poor copies of ODD MAGAZINE, with inferior layout, reproduction & lack of stapling. The fifth issue has good reproduction (Why couldn't J.H. get this on FLAME-ON? It had poorer printing than any issue of H-B.P.) and a fine am strip by the editor/publisher of ODD; but it still falls short of equaling Herring's pub. mainly thanks to the lack of stapling.. If Halperin can get & make use of his promised saddle stitch stappler next issue and have equal/superior material to that in this one he can then at long last give ODD some competion. I know he can't emmulate STAR STUDDED or FANTASY ILLUSTRATED; but I see no hardship in copying OLD or putting out a better dittoed zine them he has so far. He should take twice as long between issues if necessary; but improvement is needed if he ever wants H-B P to attain the stature of ODD, FIGHTING HEROES and other current & defunct top dittoed amature strip zines.

MISCELLANEOUS

COMIC FAVORITES Danny Cassisy informs me that the third issue of this zine will not be published due to Danny having to devote all his efforts toward making FUTURA a top lithoed ad zine. Those who ordered CH will recieve a copy of FUTURA(KOMIK KOLLECTOR) #7 instead.

MASQUERADER Chuck Moss was suppose to take over the publication of this zine with the seventh issue (Mike Vosburg put out the first six) and over a year ago he advertised and collected material for publication (including a five pager by me) and money for the issue from numerous persons. It's been fourteen months since it was supposed to be out (it was due out August of 1964) and I nor anyone else I know has recieved any issue nor any refund of their money. A Letter sent to him at his post office box in Bellevue, Nebraska come back as he no longer has it. I would like to hear from anyone who knows his current home address and/or knows if he has intention of giving his customers anything for their money. I, for one, doubt it and until something happens to cause me to change my mind I'll be of the opinion that Chuck Moss has acquired $$ & material at some members of comicdom's expense. I know I lent him a number of scarse comic zines (A-E, COMIC ART, etc.) that I have yet to get back and it looks like I never will. I don't know if Chuck's 'doings' were premedicated or are just a result of 'putting things off' & 'Not getting around to it', but I do know that he'll rate in my book at least as one of the thieves of comicdom until he gives me a satisfactory explaination of why he hasen't returned the material I lent him and why he hasn't put out the seventh issue of MASQUERADER as well as either send me back my material & put out & send me a copy of the publication or else send me due compensation for same!

Los Angeles Times for November 19, 1965 has the following on E-13: Hopefuls Flex Muscles and One is Superman By Stuart W. Little, Exclusive to the Times from the New York Herald Tribune.

NEW YORK — It was the heaviest audition and the tallest. It was easily the most muscular. It was not always the most musical. Out of it the makers of the new musical "It's Superman!" found their Clark Kent—Bob Holiday.

Holiday made it on height (he is 6 feet 4). He made it on looks and physique, and he made it on voice. He came right out and sang Lancelot's boastful number "C'est Moi" in "Camelot." He practically dared Harold Prince, the director and producer, and Charles Strouse and Lee Adams, the composer and lyricist, and David Newman and Robert Benton, the authors, to say he wasn't their Superman.

When Holiday had his first hearing, there were still perhapes half of 32 candidates screened by casting director Shirley Rich waiting in the hall outside the audition room. One by one they were called to the audition stage. There was even the 1963 Olympic pole-vaulting champion, Donald Bragg, who sang "Happy Birthday" and quite intrigued the table of judges.

Sometimes Prince at a glance ruled out a candidate on physique alone. Those who looked promising and sounded musical were given a Clark Kent scene to read. If they passed that test, they got to read a few lines of a Superman scene.

The pick were then taken over to the Imperial Theater and examined even more closely. Earlier in the day an Equity official heard about the auditions. "So that's why they've all been going off to the gym lately," he said. "They've been building up their muscles so they'd look good in Superman's leotard."

Holiday, who had made his debut in Prince's production of "Fiorello!" looked studious with Clark Kent's glasses on and as forceful as Superman with them off, and he won out in the most muscular audition the theater has seen since "Li'l Abner."

.....

I found out today that the rumor about King Features Syndicate having reprints of Flash Gordon & Prince Valiant strips published in English language edition comics in Europe is UNTRUE! Even if they wanted to, they couldn't,since they have no plates, proofs or originals to work with. Appearently the Italians still have their original plates or else proofs & thus are able to print them at an economical cost. They probably are using the same plates now that they used in the fifties, since it seems that every so many years they commenanced reprinting old comic strips; since the Europeans have & still do like them & it's a lot cheaper then paying for new material. They could use their plates to make a proof, then with the help of the American strip 'over print/letter' in the exact,original dialog & wording, make a plate & print comics containing the strips in English; but I doubt if anyone will bother to do this since said comics don't seem to sell anymore in the US & England. I checked a Mandrake tale they reprinted with the strips I have & found that they reprinted it in full & didn't leave out a single frame. Thus I'm of the opinion that all DAILY strips in the Italian comics are complete. I know the Sunday Flash Gordon weren't and don't know about the Sunday Mandrake & T.T.'sL.

OUR GANG

"Copyright" is an important word in any industry, and it is especially prevalent in the comics industry where many stories are written and drawn each month.

It might prove interesting, then, to take a close look at the copyright, for there is much that is not known to the general public.

Copyright, as the inverse of the word implies, literally means the right to copy. It pertains to an intellectual product and is exclusive in right based on authorship. Under statutory law only an author or those deriving their rights through him can rightfully claim it. In modern times, other rights have accrued to copyright, such as the rights of public performance, translation, and dramatization; to mention some of them and depending upon the type of material involved. It has therefore come to mean that body of exclusive rights granted by statute to authors for protection of their writings.

Tradition tells of one Saint Columba, the Apostle of Caledonia, who lived in the sixth century A. D. Controversy arose between the blessed saint and his venerable abbot over a copy of the abbot's Psalter that Columba made clandestinely and then refused to surrender. The King's judgment against Columba was given in language which has passed into a proverb in Ireland, "To every cow her calf."

Here we have the first suggestion of the idea that the author might have the exclusive right to reproduce or copy his literary work and to prevent others from so doing.

Historically thefirst law ever enacted for the protection of literary property was the English Statute of Anne, passed in 1710. It is the forebearer of all copyright legislation and contains two of the three requirements for copyright protection which the law of the United States still includes--registration and deposit of copies. The third requirement--that of a notice printed in the book itself--came much later.

Our own federal copyright stems from the Constitution, providing that Congress shall have the power "To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing, for limited times, to authors and inventors, the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries." (Article I, Section 8.)

The first copyright law of the United States was enacted in 1790. The scope of copyright protection since then has steadily expanded, through successive statutes, down to that of the present law, which is Title 17 of the United States Code, as amended.

Under Section 4 of the U. S. Copyright Act as codified, copyright applies to all the writings of an author. This does not mean that literally everything an author may write can by copyrighted. The test of copyright is originality. Given originality though, and provided the work is not seditious, libellous or obscene--conditions which would solely disbar it upon grounds of public policy--and further provided it is demonstrably a "writing" of an author, the mantle of copyright may fairly cover.

Titles as such are not subject to copyright, and one does not secure the exclusive right to a title by the registration of a work of such title. Copyright applies to the contents of a work and titles are recorded in the Copyright Office merely as a means of identification. In certain circumstances titles of periodicals might be trade-marked. The latter, however, is an action under the trade mark law, as would be the protection of a commercial slogan which was a mere grouping of words.

Is there any material which can be copyrighted before it is reproduced for sale? Yes. Lectures or similar works prepared for oral delivery, dramatic compositions, music, works of art, drawings or plastic works of a scientific or technical character, photographs and motion pictures may all be copyrighted prior to reproduction for sales or other public distributions. In general, they represent the type of subject matter intended either for performance or exhibition, not requiring reproductions in multiple copies in order to fulfill their purpose. However, under the express provisions of the Act, copyright securefd for a work in such forms does not exempt the copyright proprietor from the deposit of copies where the work is later reproduced in copies for sale. A second registration is then necessary.

On the other hand, books including pamphlets, stories, leaflets and schematic material, periodicals, maps, reproductions of works of art and prints or pictorial illustrations require publication with notice of copyright as the condition for copyright. Such works it is seen, are naturally intended for reproduction in multiple copies.

Radio shows can be copyrighted, generally as dramatic compositions, provided there can be deposited in the Copyright Office one complete copy of the script as it is intended to be broadcast. A mere outline or synopsis of a show will not suffice for purposes of registration. Under Section 12 of the copyright law, providing for copyright of works not reproduced for sale, one complete copy of such work is required as a condition for registration. The Copyright Office therefore requires that the copy submitted to it must be in dramatic form, substantially worked out to dialogue, acting directions, etc. In case of a movie scenario, the same requirement is obtained. The copy deposited must be that of the complete motion picture play, substantially a shooting script. Scenarios in outline or in schematic form are classed as books under the rules of the Copyright Office and as such, if they are to be copyrighted, must first be published bearing notice of copyright.

The Copyright frequently receives letters in which the writer states he has an idea for a new type of radio program that he would like to copyright. But ideas are not copyrightable. It is the literary expression of the idea in the form of a particular dramatic composition, book, etc. that forms the subject matter of copyright, rather than the idea itself.

Copyright may be transferred or assigned by an instrument in writing signed by the proprietor of the copyright. The document of assignment may be recorded in the Copyright Office. Subsequent to recordation, the assignment is returned with an acknowledgement of its recordation attached.

There can be but one copyright existing in a work and this copyright is indivisible, although more than one person may share in the rights. When it is sold or assigned as a whole, all rights pass with it. Partial rights, such as book, magazine, or motion picture rights, may be disposed of separately under license agreements, provided that the ownership of the copyright is retained.

A mere reprint of a copyrighted work is not subject to a new copyright. The copyright secured in the original publication protects the reprint; provided such reprint bears the original notice of copyright.

New editions of works in the public domain, or of copyrighted works when produced with the consent of the copyright proprietor, may be copyrighted to protect whatever new copyrightable matter there may be present. Such additional copyrights, however, apply only to the new matter. They neither extend existing copyrights nor recreate copyrights of originals that are in the public domain.

If the story is published in the newspaper or magazine, bearing a separate copyright notice in the author's name, that author already has a copyright. Otherwise, by contractual agreement with the publisher, the author may arrange to have the copyright in his story assigned to him after it has been published as part of the copyrighted periodical. If the periodical is not copyrighted as a whole and the story bears no separate notice, there is nothing the author can do subsequently to secure the copyright. It has been dedicated to the public.

The Copyright Act nowhere defines infringement and the courts have been reluctant to do so, except under the limitations of the particular facts of the case they were deciding. Generally speaking, the unauthorized reproduction of any substantial part of a work, the monopoly of which is secured to determine whether there has been copyright infringement is to inquire whether the demand for the original work has been diminished to a substantial extent through competition from the alleged infringement.

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Some years ago, the Copyright Office received a letter from two maiden sisters. They said it had been their life-long ambition to write poetry, but the necessity of having to work hard for a living left them no time. Now, however, they had retired and were in a position to indulge their fancy. But, again, they were law-abiding citizens and did not want to violate any federal law. They had heard, they said of "poetic license." Would the Copyright Office please send them two?

End

My thanks to Mr. Richard S. MacCarteney and Mr.Benson Barrett for information on the copyright law. Also thanks to Mr. Richard Mann for printing of same.

Kent Russell

"BE SURE THEY'RE BURIED!"

fiction by HOWARD KELTNER

Weldon Marco reined his paint in close to the top of a small knoll and observed the sun setting behind the distant hills. With a grin, he turned to his companion.

"Look at those thunderheads, Sam. Maybe we'll get some relief from this heat after all."

Sam Hoag leaned forward in his saddle and gazed longingly at the surrounding groves of trees dotted here and there along the New Mexico hill country.

"What're we stoppin' for, Weldon?" he asked. "Just because we ain't seen them Injuns all evenin' don't mean they ain't still back there trailin' us. Let's go!"

"Relax," Marco said. It'll be dark in another hour. They won't be huntin' us. We're safe for now."

"For now," Sam repeated, "for now. Look, Weldon, I'm tired of playin' hide and seek with these Injuns. I tell you, sooner or later they'll get us if we don't keep to the timber. I don't want my scalp hangin' from some Apache belt!"

Marco straightened with assumed finality. "Maybe you'd rather be swingin' from a rope back in Silver Springs! That sheriff is a smart hombre, Sam. We've got to stick to the open country to make time. In two or three days we'll be in Ft. Yuma. I've got friends there. We'll be safe."

Marco lit a cigarette, his eagle gaze playing over the ground they had covered, looking for signs of pursuit. He would look to be about thirty-two or three, were it not for his eyes. Though sunken far back in his head from lack of sleep, they still retained a steely glint; and when they flashed, men died. A long white scar running crookedly down his left cheek stood out against the deep tan of his face. He carried his raw-boned but well-built body in a slouchy, agressive manner. A deadly-looking Colt .44 hung loosely at his hip.

By contrast, Sam Hoag was a short, stocky-built fellow in his early twenties. His jaw was firmly set on his hawk-nosed face, but his thin lips and shifty eyes showed his cowardly craftiness.

Still, despite their differences, the two were fit companions. Theirs was a quickness gained by being on their own against the world, their wits sharply attuned to shrewdness and trickery.

Suddenly Marco sat straight up in his saddle, as for the first time his gaze swept the countryside before them.

"Am I seein' things," he ventured, "or is that a relay station up ahead yonder?"

Sam followed Marco's pointing finger to a clearing at the edge of a clump of trees, and his face lit up.

"It is! It is!" he exclaimed. "We couldn't see it before in the glare of the setting sun. Come on, Weldon, let's take a chance for a coupla hours and get something to eat."

Marco considered a moment. Probably he was not so well known in this part of the country. At least his reward notice was not tacked on every tree, like back in Texas. And the thought of food, and possibly liquor...

"Yeah, why not?" he said, and they spurred their tired mounts in the direction of the relay station.

The two outlaws swung from their horses and approached a man gently packing a mound of earth with a shovel. The man hailed them wearily.

"Howdy, stranger," Marco said. "What happened? Apaches?"

The man nodded, indicating with a wave of his hand the scattered array of arrows on the ground and sticking crazily in the boards of the station. "A small band surprised us a coupla hours ago. Joe Tipton, here," he crooked a thumb at the crude grave, "didn't even see 'em. He never had a chance. That's how Apaches operate, though. They won't attack unless they're sure of success, and when the goin' gets rough, they pull out." As an afterthought, he added, "They headed northwest, or else you'd've seen 'em."

Sam shuddered. "We've seen enough Apaches for one day," he said. "Let's go inside."

The small relay station was deserted, except for a lone, middle-aged woman sitting off to herself in a corner. She was crying.

"Tipton's widow," the man explained. "She's takin' it pretty hard. By the way, I'm Wes Gibson." He stuck out his hand.

Marco ignored him and headed for the station's short bar.

"Pour us up a drink, Sam," he said, opening a can of beans.

Sam took two bottles from the shelf and, handing one to Marco, crossed the room and peered out into the gathering dusk.

"They're camped up there," he said, "just waitin' 'til daybreak. We better be movin' soon."

"In due time, Sammy, boy," Marco said, taking a long swig of his whiskey. "You worry too much."

He looked at Wes Gibson, who was trying to console Mrs. Tipton, and not having any success. He figured she ought to be old enough to take it better than that. And Gibson was visibly shaken by what he'd been through. Inwardly, Marco sneered. No guts! Just like Sam, he was afraid of a few renegade redskins.

His gaze shifted to Sam, standing by the window, and he laughed. Sam was a coward, always would be. He'd latched onto the fellow three years ago in El Paso after a shooting scrape, in which Marco killed a man named Carlson. Sam was just a kid then, barely twenty. He had run away from home, so he claimed, to escape the brutal beatings he endured daily at the hands of his father. He begged Marco to let him ride saddle with him, and soon they were wanted by every sheriff and town marshal in Texas. So they headed for New Mexico.

Marco laughed again as he saw Sam stiffen by the window.

"What's the matter, Sam?" he jibed. "Redskins creepin' up on ya'?"

"There's a stage comin'," Sam stated flatly.

"So what?" Marco said. Then he noticed Gibson rise and go out to meet the stage. He shrugged and turned to his whiskey. Sam came over and sat beside him.

Wes Gibson entered with the stage driver, his guard, and three passengers, two men and a woman. They crossed to the bar and Gibson doled out some dry sandwiches.

"Mrs. Tipton ain't felt much like cookin' this evenin'," he said. "You understand."

"Sure," the stagedriver said.

One of the men was a dark, handsome, superbly-built youth who only gave Marco and Sam a casual glance. The woman was standing with her back to Marco, her eyes on Mrs. Tipton. Presently she went over to her and sat down.

The other man was tall and slender, a high-topped black felt hat adding ignominously to his height. His features were leathery and sharp, his temples graying. Marco judged him to be about fifty. He was carrying an old fiddle in his hand, and he was regarding Marco with hard, piercing eyes.

Marco returned the stare and the man stepped forward.

"My name's Jed Carlson," he said, and paused.

"So?" Marco drawled.

Carlson's eyes flicked to Sam, then back to Marco. "So," he said, "havn't I seen you two somewhere before?"

Marco's eyes narrowed and he became cautious. "I doubt it," he said. "Leastwise I never saw you before."

Sam said matter-of-factly, "We knew a fella name of Carlson, back in El Paso."

He started to say more, but subsided when Marco turned and glared at him.

Whatever Marco had on his mind was never said, because, for the first time, he got a good look at the girl. Wes Gibson had lit a smoky lamp, and she brought Mrs. Tipton over to the bar for a sandwich.

She was really something to look at, Marco decided, and mentally he began revising his plans for the evening. Framed by the long, golden hair was a beautiful pale face with wide set blue eyes, soft lips, and smoothe skin tinged with the underglow of a zestful vitality.

Carlson, who had never taken his eyes from Marco, noticed the lust in his gaze. Suddenly he turned and said, "Excuse me. This is Jim Handley and his wife, Jane." He indicated the stage driver and his guard, "Jake Kimbell and Lee Dawson. What's your name, mister?"

Marco ignored Carlson as he looked at the girl. "My pleasure," he said, doffing his hat and grinning broadly at her.

She muttered something stiffly, but her husband said nothing. Looking at the young man, Marco saw the hate and jealousy in his eyes. He grinned again, while he filed a mental resentment toward Jim Handley.

"So you never heard of Jed Carlson?" the fiddler tested, craftily eyeing Marco.

Marco was becoming irritated at Carlson's prying remarks.

"Nope," he said. Then his eyes fell upon the fiddle. "But I know good fiddlin' when I hear it. Strike us up a tune."

He had said it nonchalantly, his gaze shifting back to the girl. It took him a minute to realize the meaning of Carlson's reply.

"Later perhaps. Not now."

But Marco was not used to being bucked. He looked at Carlson and slowly drew his .44.

"I said play us a tune!" he snapped.

Sam bravely drew his own revolver and covered the others.

Carlson looked at the gun in Marco's hand. He lifted his eyes to Marco, and hate and scorn was written upon his face. Then, smiling wanly, he shrugged.

"What do you want to hear?" he asked.

Marco holstered his .44 and leaned back against the bar, smiling at the girl. "A good, lively breakdown," he said. "Say, like Sally Jane."

It was nearing midnight. The feeble light from a single oily lamp on the table caught the drunken glint in Marco's eyes. He was singing loudly, poorly. Across the table, solemnly studying him, Jed Carlson sat, his bow playing aimlessly across the strings of his fiddle.

In a darkened corner of the small room Jim Handley and his wife sat conversing in low tones with Mrs. Tipton. The stage driver, Jake Kimbell, was squatted on a stool behind the bar talking with Wes Gibson and and Lee Dawson. Sam Hoag stood by the window, constantly watching the red glow of the Apaches' signal fires in the northwest.

"I don't like it," he muttered. "They're out there waitin', just

waitin'. If we don't get outta here before sunrise, they'll ride on us."

Jim Handley and his wife got up and crossed the room. Marco stopped singing when he saw the girl come into the lamplight.

Handley started for the door that led to the sleeping rooms in the rear of the station.

"We're going to turn in," Jane said to Jake Kimbell, "it's late."

Jake nodded, but Marco rose unsteadily to his feet, a whiskey bottle in his hand.

"Aw, don' leave so soon," he said, staggering up close to the girl. Wait 'til I have me another little drink, and you c'n go with me!"

The girl's eyes widened, and her cheeks turned rosy; like the blush of the setting sun, Marco thought dizzily.

A heavy hand grasped Marco by the collar and spun him around. The next instant a sledgehammer fist landed full in his face and he hit the floor hard, the bottle of whiskey spinning across the room. Stunned, and partly sobered by this violence, Marco lay there for a moment blinking into the wrath-filled face of Jim Handley.

His right hand was resting over the .44 in his holster. Without a word, Marco raised himself up on his elbow, drew the Colt, and shot Jim Handley squarely in the chest. With grim satisfaction, he watched the expression on Handley's face change from one of anger to shocked surprise as he was slammed back into the bar, to sink slowly to the floor.

Jane Handley screamed and some of the men started for their guns, but Sam Hoag's voice from the window stopped them.

"Don't nobody move, or things'll get rough!"

Marco got to his feet, his .44 in his hand. He looked down at the dead man. A cold fury seemed to grip him and he kicked Handley in the side. Handley didn't move.

"He's finished," Marco said dryly. He looked at Sam. "Take him out and plant him next to Tipton. I'll teach him to slug me."

The girl overcame the shock that had rooted her to the floor. With a sob she launched herself upon Marco, beating her small fists fruitlessly upon his broad, hairy chest.

"You inhuman beast! You yellow coward! He didn't have a chance! You killed him before he could even think to go for his gun!"

Ordinarily, Marco would have laughed at her outburst. But now he was in a vile mood. He pushed her away.

"Shut up!" he growled. "The fool should have known he couldn't slug Weldon Marco and get away with it!" His gaze swept the room. "Anybody else feel like startin' something?" He holstered his gun and waited.

At first no one moved. Then Jed Carlson, who had stopped playing when the rumpus started, gently laid his fiddle on the table and rose, his chair toppling over backward with a loud clatter.

"Weldon Marco, eh?" he grunted, hate blazing in his eyes. "I thought so from the beginning! And when your pal made that remark back there about knowing a feller named Carlson in El Paso, I was sure, but I couldn't prove it then. I had to wait for you to seal your own doom, Marco!"

Marco, completely sober now, was squared off against the bar, his hand poised above his gun like an aroused rattler. "Get to the point, Carlson!" he snapped.

"The kid you shot down in cold blood in El Paso was only eighteen years old, Marco. He didn't have a chance against a professional gunman like you." Carlson paused, and his voice became venomous. "He was my son, Marco, and there ain't anything going to keep you from paying for murdering him!"

The small room was deathly quiet as the two men faced each other. The others backed toward the corner, white-faced and silent.

Carlson's draw was like a snake striking, but Marco cleared leather

first. His .44 blazed and Carlson was thrown violently against the wall, to slump slowly to the floor.

An instant later Sam Hoag burst into the room, stopped as he saw Marco standing over Carlson.

"You fool," Marco said. "Nobody ever beat me to the draw. You've played your last tune, Carlson!" He turned to Sam. "Take him out and plant him with the others. We've got a regular boot hill started here!" As an afterthought, he added,"And bury his fiddle with him. He might want to play the others a tune!" He laughed at his own humor.

Sam grimaced at the work ahead of him, but said nothing. He picked up the fiddle and bow with one hand, and with the other dragged Carlson outside.

Eyeing the group in the corner, Marco backed behind the bar and sat down. "I'm watchin' you people," he said. "Don't try anything unless you crave to join your friends." He opened a bottle and poured himself a drink.

The men began straightening up the room, and the two recent widows started for the back rooms.

"No you don't!" Marco commanded. "Nobody leaves this room. Anybody tries it gets a gut fulla lead. Get over in the corner where I can keep an eye on you."

They glared at him with eyes that blazed like an Apache torch.

Presently Sam Hoag entered and crossed over to Marco. His face was saturated with fear.

"Weldon, we gotta get outta here! Them Apaches will be swoopin' down on us at daybreak. I know, I can read their signals. And I don't want to wait around for 'em."

Marco studied Sam's face a moment, then crossed the room and peered out the shattered window.

"You're right, for once," he said. "It does look bad."

He turned to the others, considered them briefly, then made up his mind.

"All right," he snapped. "We've got about five hours before sunup, and we've got a stage outside. If we leave now and stick to the timber, maybe we can outsmart the Apaches and make it to Ft. Yuma by day-after-tomorrow. I'm givin' you a chance: do you want to go with Sam and me now, or stay and take your chances with the Apaches?"

"You loco, Weldon?" Sam protested. "Why should we drag them along? They'll only slow us down. We gotta make tracks!"

Marco looked disgustedly at Sam. "Use your head! If we can't outdistance those redskins, we'll need all the gunhands we can get. It's our only chance." He looked straight into Sam's eyes. "You want that curly hair of yours hangin' from some 'Pache belt?"

The stage creaked and groaned over the rugged ground among the thick stretch of trees. The timber was not thick enough for concealment during the daytime, but Marco was counting on being a good distance to the west by then. Any attack by the Apaches would probably come from the north, and Marco rode that side of the stage, watching. Sam Hoag sat up front with Jake Kimbell, his face drawn.

It was about three o'clock in the morning and still pitch dark when Marco heard it. He listened a minute, the hair rising on the nape of his neck. He looked toward the stage. It was to dark to see any movement.

"Hey!" he yelled. "Who's playing that fiddle?"

Jake Kimbell stopped the stage and Sam looked at Marco. "So you heard it, too, Weldon?" His beady eyes shifted in the darkness. "Weldon, it - it wasn't comin' from the stage!"

"What are you trying to say, you yellow coward?" Marco demanded, annoyed at the delay.

"It - the music was coming from - back there!" Sam pointed into the inky blackness behind them.

Marco peered into the darkness, straining his eyes. But it was no use. He couldn't penetrate the deep gloom, which revealed only dark outlines of the scattered trees. The rising wind shaped their hulks into fantastic patterns and flitting shadows, but Marco knew them for what they were. He saw no sign of movement.

"If only there was a moon," Sam said, gazing at the threatening sky, shot through with occasional flashes of lightning.

Suddenly it came again. As though from far away, yet crystal clear in its tingling tones, drifting on the wind, was the unmistakable sound of a fiddle playing; playing madly, with a demoniac glee!

"What's the matter with you two?" Jake Kimbell asked. "I don't hear anything."

Sam disregarded the question. He'd recognized one of the tunes Jed Carlson had played earlier that evening. He jumped from the stage onto his horse, and untied him with shaky fingers.

"It's him, Weldon!" he whined. "It's Carlson! He's back there somewhere following us! Back there in the dark! Let's get outta here!"

Marco collected his wits. "Shut up, you idiot! Carlson's dead. I killed him. You buried him..." he stopped as he recalled something. He'd thought it odd at the time, but hadn't had time to speculate on it. But he thought about it now. He remembered how soon Sam had come back into the station after dragging Carlson out.

He reined his paint over to where Sam sat petrified.

"You did bury him?" he asked with deliberate slowness.

Sam gulped. "Weldon, it - those fires, those signal fires. We just couldn't afford to hang around. There wasn't time..."

"Why, you sniveling little rat!" Marco rasped. He slapped Sam hard across the mouth. A trickle of blood oozed out and stained his beard.

"It wasn't necessary, Weldon," Sam whimpered. "He was dead. He was dead!"

"Then who's playing that fiddle?" Marco demanded. "His ghost?"

"I - don't know," Sam stammered. "Wh - who else could it be?"

Marco's hand drifted aimlessly to the .44 swinging at his hip. "Suppose you go find out for us, Sam."

Sam stiffened in his saddle. "No, Weldon! No! Not me!"

Marco lifted the gun from its holster. Sam heard the hammer click back. "Yes, Sam, you. Maybe next time you'll do as I say."

Terror was in Sam's eyes. He knew Marco would kill him if he didn't go back there - into that ebony blackness. Slowly he turned his sorrel and faced the wall of darkness. The wind whistled through the trees. The wind of death, thought Sam Hoag; hot and piercing, like the breath of Torment. Overhead the ominous sky seemed to pause in its billowing - waiting, expecting...

As if in anticipation, the fiddling had stopped again, and Sam disappeared into the forbidding black gulfs of nothingness.

Marco could see absolutely nothing. The gloom was a pall, hanging over him like a shroud. The sky seemed even darker. The frequent shimmers of lightning outlined the surrounding trees in eerie contrasts of dark and light shadows, and seemed to set them dancing.

The minutes dragged by. Marco remained in his saddle, sitting blankly there like a tombstone, his body drenched in a cold sweat. Not a sound broke the spell, save for the rustling of the leaves in the trees. The world was a dead place.

The next instant from out of the black depths came a scream, and the

sound of it turned Marco's blood to icewater. It was a high, piercing scream, like a panther deprived of its prey. The hot flame of terror passed through Marco like a sheet of fire. He sat stunned, numb with fear, unable to move.

Before Marco's brain could cope with the situation, the scream came again, and in its tone was utter terror, the terror a man feels who knows he is to die - horribly; at the hand of something from out of the unplumbed depths of the unknown.

"There is something back there!" Marco breathed, when he finally found his tongue.

As if to lend profound truth to that statement, out of the ensuing silence floated the unmistakable sound of a fiddle playing, wildly, ecstatically.

Then a brief brilliant flash of lightning lit up the surroundings in bizarre detail, if only for a split second. The following thunderclap was like a whiplash on Marco's brain, drowning out the sounds of devilish fiddling.

"Get that stage moving!" he yelled to Jake Kimbell.

Marco scrambled aboard, his sanity tottering on the brink of oblivion. For in the brief instant when the lightning flashed, he had witnessed a sight that would be forever stamped on his brain as one of stark madness. Marco shuddered again and again as the vision remained in his mind's eye.

He had seen Sam Hoag hanging from a limb, a rope tight about his neck, staring with unseeing eyes bulging with terror at - what?

What was it back there in the darkness that had so terrified Sam Hoag - had caused him to scream in anguished horror? Marco knew he would never forget that last expression on Sam's face; fear beyond all human comprehension.

He grabbed the reins from Jake Kimbell and lashed the horses unmercifully. He must get away, somewhere, so he could think this thing out. He was not afraid of anything he could see, but this...this...

It began to rain, an occasional patter at first that soon developed into a steady, even drizzle. Dawn broke gray and wet as Marco headed the stagecoach and its occupants out of the timber and into open country.

It rained slowly but steadily all that day. No Apache smoke signals were seen and no fiddling was heard, so, that by nightfall, Marco had regained his poise and decided to pitch camp and catch up on his sleep.

"We'll be in Ft. Yuma by noon tomorrow," he told the others. "I think it'll be safe to build a fire. No Injuns would be out in this weather."

Wes Gibson made a fire and they ate their supper. The rain stopped and the darkness descended. It dawned on Marco as he was sitting by the fire that Jane Handley was nowhere around. After a short search he found her off to herself, out of the light of the fire, lying by a clump of scrub oak on a dirty, wet quilt. She was crying softly.

He grasped her roughly by the shoulders, felt her smoothe soft flesh under his touch.

"Cut that out!" he rasped. "Get back over here where I can keep an eye on yuu."

She made no move to obey, but sat with her eyes closed, tears streaming down her lovely face. Her chest rose and fell with the labor of her breathing. The full red lips were parted in a silent moan.

Suddenly Marco snatched her to him, crushing her young lithe body firmly against his own. His mough sought the warm sweetness of her soft lips before she could recover from her surprise. She tried to fight, but he was too strong.

Then it was that he heard again the sound that turned his knees to rubber; the sound of a fiddle playing! Clear and sweet the tones drifted on the wind, casting a shroud of impending doom over the murderous gunman.

Marco's Colt leaped into his hand, and he crouched, peering into the darkness around him. The brooding sky above shut out any light from the moon and stars, and all Marco could see was the campfire a short distance away. He heaved the sobbing girl over his shoulder and headed for it. He dropped her roughly and looked at the figures sitting silently around the fire.

"You hear it?" he queried. "Don't you hear it - out there?"

Jake Kimbell lifted his head and looked sleepily at Marco. "Hear what?"

Marco went a little wild then. He shouted incantations and his .44 blazed at every moving shadow. The others broke for the stage and climbed inside.

The eerie fiddling continued. The air was heavy with the sounds, seemingly coming from everywhere and nowhere. Marco cursed and ranted and sent bullet after bullet screaming into the darkness, pausing only to reload the Colt.

"Come out, Jed Carlson!" he yelled. "Come out where I can see you or I'm comin' in after you!"

There was no pause in the music. Out there somewhere in the blackness the devil was playing a fiddle fiendishly, the vibrant notes filling the air with Inferno's Symphony.

Marco roared. In a wild frenzy he disappeared into the darkness, shouting his defiance and firing his gun.

Suddenly the music stopped. Marco stopped yelling and shooting. The silence descended with the suddeness of a thunderclap. Then the night air was rent by a blood-curdling scream that sent every occupant of the stage out into the open, gazing into the darkness. It came again, a terrible cry mixed with anger and horror and hopelessness.

Once again the profound silence, followed by the sound of a fiddle playing. But this time the notes were peaceful and sweet, with a soft tranquility.

Jane Handley was in Mrs. Tipton's arms, shuddering.

"D'ya think we better be pullin' out of here before that thing gets us?" Jake Kimbell asked, peering into the gloom. "I'm tired of pretendin' I don't hear nothin'."

Lee Dawson stroked his beared. "I don't think it's necessary. Carlson didn't have nothin' against us."

Early the next morning they found Marco swinging from the limb of the only tree in miles, his face a twisted mass of horror. A note was pinned to the tree with Marco's knife. It read:

Mrs. Handley - we have evened our scores with Weldon Marco.

The sun was rising in the east, its rays bathing the low hills, quiet valleys and rolling plains in glorious splendor; a scene of inexplicable beauty.

A lone horse stood at the summit of one of the hills, calmly cropping the short grass. Perhaps the rider was still asleep, or had merely strolled off a short distance. At first glance the casual observer may have thought he saw shafts of sunlight shimmer at a point just above the empty saddle, for the barest fraction of a moment. But a second, quick look would reveal only an old battered fiddle tied with infinite care to the saddle horn.

THE END (of a lawless career)

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